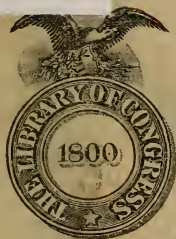


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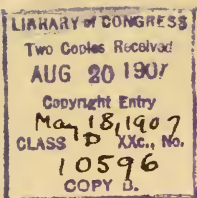
# The Village Post-Office

By JESSIE A. KELLEY .

*Author of "The Pedlers' Parade," "Squire Judkin's  
Apple Bee," "Her Weekly Allowance," "Miss  
Prim's Kindergarten," "Santa's Surprise," etc.*

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BOSTON  
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1907



# The Village Post-Office

## CHARACTERS

PS635  
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- WILLIAM JONES, *postmaster.*  
JERUSHY JONES, *his wife.*  
ELYZABYTHE JONES, *their daughter, just home from boarding school, very affected.*  
JAMES HENRY JONES, *their son, about sixteen years of age; a green country boy.*  
COLONEL GIBSON, *big story-teller.*  
JOSEPH ROBINSON, *bigger story-teller.*  
SILAS HARDHACK, *still bigger story-teller.*  
DEACON SLOCUM, *horse trader.*  
LIZY ANN SLOCUM, *his wife.*  
BETSEY WINSLOW, *dressmaker.*  
REV. TOBIAS DUSENBERRY.  
REUBEN RICKS, *who stutters.*  
SUSAN SMITH, *who helps Mrs. Jones.*  
WIDOW GRAY.  
LEE SING, *a Chinaman.*  
MRS. JOSEPH ROBINSON.  
MARY ANN STEDMAN, *deaf.*  
CYRUS DEPEW, *town philanthropist.*



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# The Village Post-Office

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## CHARACTERS (*continued*)

SAMANTHY DEPEW, *his wife.*

MANDY BAKER, *believer in Woman's Rights.*

JOB BAKER, *her meek husband.*

PATRICK O'MULLIGAN.

DOCTOR DOLLIVER.

DELILAH MARTIN.

MRS. BRIGGS, *who has recently come from the city.*

CLAUDIUS BRIGGS, *her son.*

NORAH CASSIDY, *Mrs. Briggs' hired girl.*

ITALIAN.

JONATHAN ABNER, } *who have visited the city.*

CYNTHIA ABNER, }

MARTHY REYNOLDS, *a comforting friend.*

HANS SCHNEIDER, *a German.*

FRANCIS ST. CLAIR BIGELOW, *agent; very dudish.*

MATILDY HOXIE, *who knows all the news.*

ZEKE HINES, *who isn't very bright.*

HENRY WITTHROW,

KATIE DUSENBERRY,

ANNIE GOODWIN,

BOBBIE ROBINSON,

JENNIE BROWN,

JOHNNIE DOLLIVER,

MARY SLOCUM,

} *children.*

One person may take several parts. Widow Gray, Mrs. Robinson and Matildy Hoxie can be taken by one, Reuben Ricks and Zeke Hines by one, doctor and minister by one, German and Italian by one, Joseph Robinson and dude by one. Other parts may be doubled also and some characters may be easily omitted if desired.



## COSTUMES

The costumes should be such as are usually found in a country town, women with calico wrappers or dresses, shawls, bonnets, etc.; men with overalls, long-legged boots. James, Henry and Reuben should have suits partly outgrown, Zeke a rather grotesque get-up, doctor and minister ordinary suits, Lee Sing, Chinese dress, Mrs. Briggs quite dressy, her son, a large boy dressed Lord Fauntleroy style, Norah, very slatternly.

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## STAGE ARRANGEMENT

The stage arrangement is very simple. Some tables with dark cambric tacked on falling to floor will answer for counters. A small-paned window with one light out and pigeon holes arranged with pasteboard forms the post-office. A few hanging shelves can be arranged on which place empty boxes of breakfast foods, empty cans of various kinds which can easily be saved by the society and a few pieces of cloth which can be borrowed from a store. Men's overalls, rubber boots, brooms, anything to make it look like a typical country store may be hung around and various signs and posters tacked up. A small stove around which the men sit is an addition but may be dispensed with. Kegs will answer for chairs. Have showcase containing candy, spools, etc., on counter if possible. Arrange one side for groceries, etc., the other side for dry goods.

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## RECITATIONS

"Priscilla Prim's Views on Woman's Rights" may be found in Number Twenty-seven One Hundred Choice Selections, price thirty cents, and Maud Muller in Number Thirty, price thirty cents. Other recitations and songs may also be introduced. A few stories and jokes have been used by courtesy of Judge Publishing Company, New York.

# The Village Post-Office

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SCENE.—*See note on page 4.* MRS. JONES *is discovered arranging some goods on shelf.*

MRS. JONES (*calls*). Susan, Susan.

SUSAN (*poking head in door*). What d'ye want, Mis' Jones?

MRS. J. Susan, you git the fire started and put on some pertaters to bile. It's most six o'clock and William will be gitting home purty quick with his load of goods an' the mail, tired and hungry, and some good fried salt pork and biled pertaters'll taste drefful good to him, I reckon.

SUS. Yes, all right, Mis' Jones, I'll have 'em on in a jiffy. (*Sus. goes out but returns immediately.*) Mis' Jones, I can't cook the taters. There ain't no wood cut. It's all gone.

MRS. J. Well, Susan, why didn't you tell me 'twas all gone before this time of day?

SUS. Well, it wasn't all gone before and when it wasn't all gone, how could I tell you it was all gone when it wasn't all gone.

MRS. J. I'll call James Henry and see if he's got some cut as I told him to.

SUS. (*goes out, muttering*). That lazy good-fer-nothin' clown, don't believe he's got a stick cut.

MRS. J. (*going to door, calls, louder each time*). James, James Henry, James Hen-e-ry—James.

JAMES HENRY (*outside*). What ye want now, ma?

MRS. J. Where's that wood I sent ye to cut two hours ago? Here it's time to git supper and not a stick of wood in the wood-box and your fater'll be here in a few minits and no vittles ready fer him. Come along quick now and bring in an armful and some kindlin'.

JAM. (*with few pieces of wood on one arm, something in other arm held behind back*). Here ye are, ma!

MRS. J. Is that all the wood you've got cut?

JAM. Yes, maw, that's all I've had time ter.

MRS. J. What's that you've got behind yer?

JAM. Nothin'.

MRS. J. (*takes hold of arm and jerks it round front; wood falls on floor*). That tells the story, you shiftless creature, you've bin wastin' time diggin' those air wigglin' worms 'stead of cuttin' wood as you're told. Now take that wood inter the kitchen, then hustle out to thet woodpile and work till supper time or I'll tell yer father and he'll dust yer jacket. (JAM. *picks up wood, takes it into kitchen, then passes through store, out other door, where a few strokes of the axe are heard, then silence. Enter MARY SLOCUM.*) How-de-do, Mary? What d'you want ter-night?

MARY. Ma wants two pounds of butter 'zactly like you sent her 'fore and if it isn't jest like that she told me not ter take it.

MRS. J. Did she like the last very much? I thought your ma was makin' her own butter now.

MARY. Yes, she is, we've gut some ellegant butter she made but yer see some of our city relations are rubberin' round to see if they want ter light on us fer the summer but ma says she's onto 'em and she's gut some eggs the old hen's bin settin' on fer a week and some skim milk, kinder sour, she was a goin' to give to the pigs and if she can git some of thet butter like yer sent her before she thinks it'll fix 'em so they wunt stay long.

MRS. J. Here's yer butter, Mary, and tell yer ma I hope it'll do the work. (*Exit MARY.*) I don't blame Lizy Slocum a bit. The way those forty-second cousins of hern do try to git free board fer the summer beats all. I notice there are never no invitations fer Lizy to visit them in the winter. Some folks is sponges. Susan—Susan. (*Sus. enters.*) Got the fire made?

SUS. Yes, Mis' Jones, I've gut it made but 'less Jim Henry brings in some more wood purty quick 'twon't stay made long.

MRS. J. Isn't there some lettuce in the pantry, Susan?

SUS. Yes, Mis' Jones, I think I seed some in there.

MRS. J. I reckon we'd better hev that 'fore it's all wilted. You can wash thet while the pertaters are bilin'.

SUS. All right, Mis' Jones. (*Goes out but reappears at once.*) Mis' Jones, I guess I'll have to hev some soap to wash the lettis with. Used up all the soap I hed in the kitchen.

MRS. J. Don't you know any better than to wash lettis with soap? Use clear water and plenty of it. (*Sus. starts*



to go out.) Say, Susan, hev you made thet puddin' I told yer to?

SUS. Gut it in the oven and it looks fine as a fiddle, but how'll I know when it's done?

MRS. J. Stick a knife into it and if it comes out clean, it's done and you can take it out.

JAM. (*coming in door with armful of wood*). Say, Susan, if thet knife comes out clean, stick all the rest of the knives in the house in, then p'raps we'll have 'em clean fer once.

SUS. Think yer smart, don't ye? Come here and let me put your head in to see if 'twould clean yer face.

(*Sticks out tongue at him and goes out. JAM. chases her with stick of wood. Calls of "Whoa! Whoa there!" outside. Two men bring in large box, set it up on end, showing printed on it in large letters: "Bill Inside."*)

MRS. J. What on airth is thet great box? (*Reads.*) "Bill Inside." (*Shrieeks and wrings hands.*) Oh, Bill Jones, Bill Jones, what has happened to you? Oh, Liz! Liz! Jim Henry! Jim Henry! Liz! Come quick! Come quick!

(JAM. *rushes in. ELYZABYTHE enters slowly.*)

ELYZABYTHE. Mama, will you kindly remember that my name is Elyzabythe and so designate me when you have occasion to communicate with me.

MRS. J. Oh, Liz—Elyzabythe, do you hear? Your poor father has been killed and his poor remains are inside that box 'cause it says on it "Bill Inside." Jim Henry, run quick, run quick and get some one to open it and take the poor man out. Oh, dear! Oh, dear me!

(JAM. *rushes out but returns. ELYZ. coolly walks over to box and examines.*)

ELYZ. Mama, this box simply contains some wearing apparel which I purchased before coming home from college and had the bill sent with the goods. The *bill* of the goods is *inside* the box.

MRS. J. Is that what it means? It did give me an awful start! Well, I'm thankful if yer father is still alive but p'raps when he sees thet air bill it'll be the death of him arter all. Do you mean to say thet box is full of "wearing 'parel" as ye call it?

ELYZ. Yes, those are a few of the many articles which I found it necessary for me to purchase in order to present an attractive appearance among my associates in the high institution of learning upon my return. [*Exit ELYZ.*]

MRS. J. If a body ever wants to bring down ther gray hairs in sorrer to the grave they jist want to send their darters off to boarding school. Sich nonsensical, high-faluting idees as they git into their heads. Their fathers and mothers ain't good enough fer them to wipe their feet on. Wearing 'parel, indeed. Jim Henry, you take that air box of wearing 'parel out of my sight lively.

(*JAM. takes out box. Team heard outside; cries of: "Whoa! Whoa thar, Molly!"*)

MR. JONES (*outside*). Jim Henry! Jim! Hi, there, Jim, hurry up out here and take these horses. (*Enters with mail-bag over shoulder.*) I'm stiff as an old horse settin' on thet hard wagon seat so long. Got supper most ready, mother? I'm half starved. Ain't et nothin' sence breakfast but a leetle cracker and cheese.

MRS. J. Yes, supper's all ready, I guess. Lots of mail ter-night, ain't there? You go right out and git supper, and James Henry and me will git this mail stamped and put up 'fore the folks begin comin' in.

(*MR. JONES goes into kitchen. JAM. enters. MRS. J. closes office window and she and JAM. stamp and put letters and papers in boxes. Enter JOSEPH ROBINSON, walks around store, then seats himself by stove. Enter COLONEL GIBSON.*)

JOSEPH. Evenin', Colonel. We air goin' to hev rain, I reckon. My old jintz been achin' all day and it allus storms when the rheumatiz ketches me like that.

COLONEL. Looks like a storm. Dunno but'll be snow.

JOS. Guess not, 'tain't Sunday. Snow-storms allus dew here 'bout Sunday night.

COL. Think ye're a weather prophet, do ye? Well, I hope ye strike it righter offener'n them air fellers at Washington. If it says rain when I'm a hayin' I jist hustle 'round and git down a good lot of grass 'cause I'm purty nigh sartain to hev good weather.

JOS. I don't sot up to be no great of a weather prophet but

my wife allus washes Monday even if the circus comes to town that day and, by jiminy, I never knew it to fail thet I didn't hev to git up and shovel a path Monday mornin' so's she could hang out thet pesky washing. Jest my luck!

COL. 'Speakin' 'bout rain reminds me of a rain we had onct when I was in the army. It began with big drops, kinder scatterin' like, and kep' a growin' harder. I was outside my tent, about as fer away frum it as across this room and thought I'd better be making tracks fer it so I picked up a bucket I hed, swung it on my arm and run fer that tent and before I gut half way there, thet bucket was runnin' over, plumb full and runnin' over. Yes-sir-ee and it wan't further then acrost this store. Thet was a rain.

JOS. That makes me think of a rain we hed onct when I wuz a boy. I stood looking out the winder watchin' a flock of wild ducks go over and would you believe it, Colonel, it rained so hard them ducks jest simply folded their wings and swum along in the air. Don't hev any sich rains nowadays.

*Enter DEACON SLOCUM and wife, LIZY ANN.*

MRS. SLOCUM. Good-evenin', Colonel. Good-evenin', Joseph. (DEA. *also speaks to both.*) How air all your folks, Joseph?

JOS. Purty well, thank ye. My wife's bin over to spend a few days with her mother but she gut back las' night. Her mother's bin kinder sickly this winter and Phrony went over and did a batch of cookin' that would sorter help out fer a spell.

MRS. SLO. There, I told Phineas when we druv by your house yesterday that I didn't b'lieve Phrony was to hum 'cause ev'ry curtain in thet house was pushed up to a diff'rent angle. Knew thet wan't Phrony's housekeepin'. She's sich a worker. How's your wife, Colonel?

COL. She's well. Betsey Winslow's bin sewin' fer her to-day, bin makin' her a new dress.

MRS. SLO. Dew tell. Well your wife'll know all the news fur ten miles 'round if she's had Betsey a day. (*Mail window opens. COL., JOS. and DEA. get papers and return to stove. MRS. SLO. gets letter which she turns over and over, tries to read postmark, etc.*) Well, now, I dew wonder who this can be frum; more folks thet love their country cousins. I'll hev five yards of crash fur a couple of roller tow'ls, Mis' Jones.

(MRS. J. and MRS. SLO. go over to other side of store.)

MRS. J. How'd you come out with them relatives ye hed to supper, Lizy?

MRS. SLO. (*laughing heartily*). Oh, I fixed 'em all right. They'd bin a-tellin' how they doted on new butter, rich, creamy milk, fresh eggs, my lovely home-made biskits an' preserves, and how they'd enjoy spendin' the summer with me and how nice 'twould be fur the men-folks to cum down onct in a while to spend Sunday. Well, I jist made some biskits green with sody, put on some of my ras'berry presarve thet had fomented, cooked some eggs the old yaller hen had been a-settin' on nigh onto two weeks, some sour, skim milk and thet air butter you sent me and sot 'em down to supper, and if ever you see a disgusted lookin' lot of mortals them was and I didn't hear another word about spendin' the summer with me. Guess I'll see what this letter says. (*Opens and reads.*) "DEAR COUSIN ELIZA." Humph! "It is with great regret that I realize how long it is since I have written to you." Not sence she wanted to spend the summer with me before. "How we do neglect even those whom we love the best, but now we are going to make amends. I know how lonely you must be on the farm; we have decided this year that John, myself and our six lovely cherubs"—imps, I call 'em—"will spend our entire summer with you. Blood is thicker than water and we all love to see our dear cousins. We shall have eight trunks and shall need seven sleeping rooms as I like to have each of the children have a separate room. If you have not already a bath-tub, you will probably want to get one before we arrive. I hope you have plenty of cows and hens so we may have an abundance of milk and eggs and also a couple of horses that we may enjoy the beautiful drives. I know how delighted you will be to have us and how eagerly you will await our arrival. Ever your own loving cousin."

MRS. J. I've gut some more of thet butter, Lizy.

MRS. SLO. And I've got some more of the other stuff. Guess I kin arrange it so their stay'll be brief. Even a worm will turn at last. I want some spool cotton, Jerushy, guess I'll hev one black and one white, 'bout number forty, and I want somethin' to make Phineas some shirts. I tell him he's awful hard on socks and shirts. His shirts are allus comin' holes in the elbows and I've knit him five pair of socks this winter and he got his toes through ev'ry one of 'em.

(MRS. J. *takes down cloth.* MRS. SLO. *examines.*)

*Enter* JOHNNIE DOLLIVER, *with very dirty face.*

MRS. J. Well, Johnnie, what'd yer ma send you fer? My sakes alive! What a dirty face you've got! Why don't you wash it?

JOHNNIE. You bet yer life I don't wash my face no more. Looked at the water through pa's microscope last night and the water was full of little crawly bugs. Bet I'm not goin' to hev them things crawlin' all over my face with their funny little legs.

MRS. SLO. An agent's bin 'round leavin' cakes of soap fur samples. Saw him leave one at your house, Johnnie.

JOHN. Gee, I-guess I'd better not go home for awhile. Ma'll want to be tryin' it on me.

MRS. J. What did you say your mother wanted, Johnnie?

JOHN. She wants two pounds of sugar, a pound of soda and a pound of raisins. (MRS. J. *gets them*; JOHN. *stands looking in showcase.*) I'll have a stick of that striped candy and a piece of gum. Ma says you'll have to charge 'em 'til some of these folks that have been sick pay dad their bills.

MRS. J. All right, Johnnie. Don't forget to try that sample of soap.

(*Takes down account book and writes the charge.*)

JOHN. (*to COL., who has got up and is standing before stove, very bow-legged*). Hi, Colonel, you'd better get away from that stove. You're warping.

(JOHN. *dodges out.* COL. *starts to follow but comes back.*)

COL. Young 'uns nowadays has no respect fer their betters. S'pose he's making fun of my bow-legs. They did good service for my country, if they be a little crooked.

*Enter* MR. J.

MR. J. How-do, Lizy? How-do, folks? (*Goes over to stove and sits down.*) Well, Deacon, bin tradin' hosses to-day?

DEA. Yes, did do a leetle tradin'. Know that air insurance chap that's bin hanging 'round here fer some time? Wall, he decided he could do more bizness if he hed a boss, could kiver more territory; he sed. Ruther guess he will, when thet hoss

gives one of his kicks! reckon he'll kiver consid'able more territory—ha—ha—ha.

MR. J. You don't mean to say he bought that ring-boned, balky old kicker of yours you've bin tryin' to sell fer five year.

DEA. Well, I'll tell you how it was. I showed him all the hosses and told him I'd sell him any except that one, but I didn't want to sell him at enny price, but sich is the contrarieness of human natur that after I'd sed that nothin'ud do, but he must hev that one, so as I allus try to be obleegin' when I kin, I finally let him have it.

MR. J. Bound to please him, hey, Deacon?

COL. That was a purty good joke on that there other city chap that bought your old balky roan, hey, Deacon?

DEA. (*chuckling*). Ever hear 'bout that, Bill?

MR. J. No, don't believe I hev, Deacon.

DEA. This air city chap wanted to buy a hoss and liked the looks of thet balky roan so well I thought to be sure he'd buy it, but when he wanted me to hitch up and try the critter I thought the trade was off, 'cause you know that old roan would stop ev'ry other thing. Finally he sez, sez he, "What ails your hoss? Is he sick?" "Oh, no," sez I, "he's so 'fraid he wunt do as he's told that he stops ev'ry little while to hear if I've said Whoa." The blamed idjut didn't know a balky horse when he see one and was so pleased "with sich intelligence in a dumb animal," as he called it, thet he bought him right off. (*Laughter.*)

*Enter BETSEY WINSLOW ; bows to men.*

BETSEY. Good-evenin', Mis' Jones—good-evenin', Mis' Slocum. Any mail fer me to-night, Mis' Jones?

MRS. J. Yes, I think I did see a letter for you.

(*Gives her letter.*)

BET. (*opens letter*). Huh, it's frum a dry goods firm in Bosting. Printed. They needn't print their letters to me, guess I kin read writin' if I do live in the country. City folks seems to think we don't know nothin'. I've been sewin' fer Mis' Gibson all day. She's bin heving a new dress made fer the weddin' and I want to git a few hooks and eyes and a little lace to finish it. (MRS. J. *shows hooks, eyes and lace.* BET. *holds lace in hand while talking.*) Coopid is pretty busy 'round these parts lately.



MR. J. Better look out, Betsey, he'll be hitting you.

BET. Yes, I'm getting kinder scairt, myself. You knew Sally Hoskins and Bijé Todd were united in the holy bonds of wedlock last night, didn't you?

MRS. J. Yes, I heerd so. What did Sally wear?

BET. Her weddin' dress was that old green serge of her mother's and she and her mother made it over themselves, and it kinder wrinkled some between the shoulders, seeing as how her mother weighs a hundred pounds more'n Sally, and they thought it wouldn't pay to rip it apart, and the skirt was kinder short 'cause her mother is about four inches shorter'n Sally, and they didn't hev no new cloth to piece it down. She wore a long, green veil, caught up with a bunch of dandelions, and carried a shower bouquet of them. Sally says she read thet was the style now, and young folks will have style nowadays, no matter what it costs.

MRS. SLO. How'd Bijé look? Pretty spruce?

BET. He had on a pair of black and white check pants, good big checks that a body could see. They were kinder short, too, and he'd bought a second hand black coat over to the city. The sleeves of that were pretty short, too, and it wuz so tight I was 'fraid 'twould bust if he luffed hard, but 'twas a rale good coat, not worn much of any, and he wore a green necktie to match Sally's veil. Yes, they both looked rale sweet.

MRS. J. S'pose they hed refreshments.

BET. Yes, the parson sed he'd marry 'em fer fifty cents ef he could stay to the weddin' supper, so they jist spread themselves on the supper. Had doughnuts and cheese, apple, mince and squash pie and gingerbread. After the supper they played Copenhagen and Drop the Handkerchief, then the boys give them a bellin' and they slied away and started on their weddin' tour. Went over to Bijé's sister to spend the night. Thet's nearly five miles and Bijé sed he didn't know as it 'ud pay bein' as how they'd hev to get up pretty early to git back in time fur work but Sally sed it wouldn't seem like gitting married at all 'less they went away on their honeymoon. Yes, it wuz a brilliyunt affair and I hope they'll hev a pleasant voyage on the sea of matrimony with roses thickly strowed along their path and may the yoke set lightly on their necks as they travel the long broad highway of life together. How much is this lace a yard, Mrs. Jones?

MRS. J. That one is ten cents a yard and this one is eight.

BET. This one is rale purty and I guess I'll have half a yard if 'tis ten cents. Mis' Gibson wants somethin' pretty rich and dressy to finish the neck and she don't mind if it is ruther expensive. And I'll take a dozen of them hooks and eyes and a spool of white cotting, number fifty. (MRS. J. *does them up.* BET. *after much trouble gets pocketbook out of pocket in petticoat.*) What'll that come to, Mis' Jones?

MRS. J. Just twenty cents.

BET. Here's a quarter. Kin you change that? I ain't got nothin' smaller.

MRS. J. I think I've got five cents. Yes, here's one.

*Enter ELYZ.*

MRS. SLO. How-do, Lizzie? S'pose ye're delighted to be back hum agin.

ELYZ. (*aside*). When will these dreadful people ever learn to designate me by my proper appellation?

(MRS. SLO. and BET. *both shake hands with ELYZ.* ELYZ. *shakes hands languidly with arm held high in the air.*)

MRS. SLO. Land sakes, Liz, what's happened to yer arm? Can't you git it down no lower'n that? I'd rub it with Snider's Liniment. It's rale good fer stiffness. Phineas uses it on his hosses and it helps 'em amazingly.

(ELYZ. *tosses head disdainfully but says nothing.*)

BET. I s'pose you found it ruther warm in the city, Lizzie.

ELYZ. (*affectedly*). Yes, the heat was exceedingly debilitating and the humidity was so excessive that some days I felt nervously prostrated.

MRS. SLO. You oughter take a leetle sulphur and molasses when you feel like that and it will brace you up in no time.

(ELYZ. *sits down and reads book.*)

BET. S'pose you're fond of reading them air new novels, Lizzie.

ELYZ. No, I find the new novels sadly lacking in an intelligent grasp of life and character, without a psychological insight into the temperamental distinctions of sex, wanting all familiarity with the euphonious juxtapositions of words and

therefore foolish and futile as an exposition of human probabilities.

MRS. SLO. (*holding up hands*). Dew tell. I allus thought 'em bad but I didn't know they was so bad as all thet. I'll never read one of the pesky things. It's enough to bring one's soul down to perdition.

*Enter MR. DUSENBERRY.*

MR. DUSENBERRY. Any mail for me to-night, Mr. Jones? (MR. J. *goes to look, hands out letter and paper.* MR. D. *then goes over to women and shakes hands with all.*) Well, Lizzie, you're back with us once more. Presume you came off with flying colors on that essay of yours. What was your subject?

ELYZ. "The Essentials of the Essentially Essential."

MR. D. (*smiling*). It must have been deeply interesting. Hear you brought home a new dog for a pet.

JAM. (*comes over*). Mr. Dusenberry, ye jest ought to see Liz's new dorg, new kind. He's a Spitz.

ELYZ. James Henry, did I not tell you that only vulgar people called them Spitz dogs. Mr. Dusenberry, he is an expectorating dog.

MR. D. (*turning aside to smile*). Indeed, I shall surely want to see this wonderful dog.

MRS. J. S'pose you went to Mis' Briggs' tea-party as she called it. She's interducing a good many of her city ideeas here: I couldn't go sence I couldn't leave the store.

MR. D. Yes, it was quite a grand affair.

MRS. SLO. They do say as how she sarved sassafras tea and pigs' feet and wore a new gown and vanilla bean earrings and persided like a queen. You know she's sent out cards saying she will receive her friends Mondays. I s'pose thet's to let folks know she don't do her own washin' no longer. S'pose she has thet heathen Chinee that's cum into town do it. I'd like to see myself wear anythin' after he'd washed it.

BET. Nor I, either. Well, I must be a-goin'. Folks thet hev to sew fer their daily bread can't dissipate much. Good-night, everybody. [*Exit BET.*]

MR. D. (*to ELYZ. who is still reading*). Are you fond of literature, Elyzabythe?

ELYZ. Yes, passionately fond of the high class. Nothing shallow appeals to my nature.

MR. D. You admire Scott's "Lady of the Lake," I presume.

ELYZ. It is perfectly lovely.

MR. D. And Scott's "Marmion"?

ELYZ. It is an intellectual feast.

MRS. SLO. How do ye like Scott's Emulsion, Lizzie?

ELYZ. I think it's the best thing he ever wrote.

JAM. (*takes down bottle from shelf*). Well, Liz, here's a bottle of Scott's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil. Jest try it and see if 'tis the best thing *you ever took*.

(*All laugh. ELYZ. confusedly reads a minute, then goes out.*

*Enter SUS. and sits down on settee after speaking to folks.*

JAM. *sits beside her, trying to make love in shy awkward fashion, puts arm around her, SUS. pulls away, pretends to slap him, etc.* MR. D. *goes over to stove where men are reading papers.* MRS. J. and MRS. SLO. *seated, apparently talking.*)

MR. D. Well, gentlemen, what's the news? You all seem much interested.

COL. I've jest been a readin' 'bout the doings in Washington. Mighty smart president we've got. Here's a special message he's jest sent to Congress. Ain't read it yet but expect it's a powerful fine one.

MR. D. Read it aloud to us, Colonel. I'm sure we'll all enjoy it.

COL. (*reading*). "During the past year 22,326 new applications for army and navy pensions have been received and it has been discovered that kerosene will answer for a piano polish if rubbed on with a red flannel rag. It also cleanses and preserves from the ravages of insects. During the year 3,264,657 acres of public lands have been given over to settlers and you will save money by patronizing Robinson's clothing store. Great bargains in shop worn goods. Come to the blue front store. There are 17,452 survivors of the Mexican War, all of whom are on the pension roll and Brown & Houston have just received another lot of those wrappers at seventy nine cents each. They are the equal of any ninety-eight cent wrapper bought elsewhere."

Jos. That message sounds jest about as sensible as you'd expect from a Republican.

DEA. Well, I confess it does sound rather queer fer a

special message to Congress, but I'd bank on that there president anyway. Guess he knows what he's about. Prob'bly wants ter make it practical fer the common people.

MR. D. Guess the editor and the advertising manager must have had a little mix-up. Did you know we are going to lose Brother Hopkins of the Baptist Church? He read his resignation last Sunday morning and his people are feeling rather sore about it, but I don't know as I blame him any. He's been there laboring with them for fifteen years at three hundred dollars a year, paid quarterly, or supposed to be, and last quarter Deacon Harlow, acting as an officer of the church, paid him his salary with a promissory note at six months, and then as a private individual offered to discount it for him at ten per cent. if he'd take part of it in potatoes and pumpkins, half rotten ones at that. Brother Hopkins had a heart-to-heart talk with me and he said he had meekly stood their donation parties for fifteen years, but his spirit rose in rebellion at that and he thought the Lord called him elsewhere.

MR. J. Don't blame him a bit. I remember Sister Potter took him eight clothespins fer his last donation and said she would take ten cents off the amount she usually paid toward his salary.

COL. Deacon Smith gave four phosphorescent herring and ain't never give a cent sence.

MRS. J. Yes, and Mis' Solomon hed some sausage meat she'd sweetened an' some mincemeat she'd peppered by mistake and she took that over. Said she hated to give it to the pigs and her folks wouldn't eat it.

JOS. Believe thet was the time Jane Hastings gave the minister a box of hairpins. I'm glad he had sense enough to git up and git.

MR. D. Don't know as his folks would care so much if it wasn't for his farewell sermon, but I'm afraid they'll never forgive him that.

MRS. SLO. I ain't heard a word about it. Guess they've been keepin' pretty mum.

MR. D. Well, it read something like this: "Brothers and sisters, I am going to say good-bye to you. I have labored among you nigh onto fifteen years, and I think it would take more years than are left to me here on earth to prepare you for a heavenly home hereafter, so I advise you to get a younger man to take up the heavy task. I don't think you love me because you don't pay my salary; your donations are moldy

fruit and wormy apples, and by their fruits ye shall know them. I am going to a better place. I have been called to be chaplain of a penitentiary. I go to prepare a place for you. Good-bye." (*Laughter.*)

COL. Well, that was kinder rubbin' it in, wa'n't it?

MRS. J. Sarves 'em jist right. That sassiety allus was drefful mean with their pastor.

MR. D. I must be going home to get that sermon ready for you to listen to next Sunday. Oh, Mrs. Jones, my wife told me to bring home half a pound of tea. (*Gets tea, pays.*)

*Enter REUBEN RICKS.*

DEA. Hello, Reuben, how's that dog of yours to-night?

REUBEN (*stuttering*). H-h-he's a-a-all r-r-right. T-th-that d-do-dog g-g-gu-gut the k-ke-keen-keenest sc-sc-scent of any d-do-dog I ever s-s-saw.

DEA. How do you know he has, Reuben?

REU. Why, y-yes-y-yesterday he t-t-tracked mu-mu-me after I had g-g-gone s-s-seven m-ni-miles f-f-from the h-h-house. W-w-what you t-t-think of t-th-that?

JOS. I should think you needed a bath, Reuben.

REU. N-n-no, I d-d-don't. T-t-took one la-la-last su-s-summer. (*Laughter.*)

MR. D. Good-night, everybody. Hope to see you all at church Sunday morning.

CHORUS. Good-night, parson. Good-night, Mr. Dusenberry.

REU. A-a-any le-l-letter f-f-for m-m-me to-night, M-M-Mis' J-J-Jones?

MRS. J. No, Reuben, nothin' to-night. Was you expecting anything pertickeler?

REU. Y-y-yes. Y-y-you k-k-know the v-v-va-valves of my c-c-cornet s-st-stuck so I w-w-wrote to t-t-the o-o-ones I b-bought it of a-a-and t-t-they s-said to use s-s-sa-saliva, so I w-w-wrote and t-t-told t-t-them to s-s-send t-t-ten c-c-cents worth of s-s-saliva and I a-a-ain't g-g-got it y-y-yet.

MR. J. Perhaps it'll come to-morrow, Reuben.

REU. H-h-hope it w-w-will s-so I c-c-can b-b-blow m-m-my c-c-cornet.

(REU. goes over to settee, sits on other side of SUS. JAM. glares at him, gradually pushes SUS. along until REU. falls off.)



SUS. Don't you know no better'n that, Jim Henry Jones. Guess you'd better go and larn some manners.

JAM. My nose seems to be out of jint. Two's company and three's a crowd, and I seem to be the crowd. Susan Smith, you are a heartless flirt. (*Aside.*) I'll write her a letter and let her know she can't trifle with my affections.

(*Goes to other side and writes busily.*)

REU. (*sits close to SUS.*). Y-y-you are g-g-going t-t-to b-be m-m-married.

SUS. Land sakes alive, me married. Who is it I'm agoin' to marry?

REU. M-m-me. I c-c-came o-o-over on p-p-pup-purpose to-night to t-t-tell y-y-you.

SUS. Do you s'pose I'd marry any one that drinks like you do?

REU. I r-r-resolved la-last y-y-year t-t-that I w-w-wouldn't d-d-drink anything s-st-stronger than b-b-b-bub-buttermilk b-but my st-st-st-stuttering is a g-g-great b-b-bother to m-mu-me. W-w-when I w-w-want a g-gl-glass of b-b-bub-buttermilk they always t-t-think I w-w-want bu-bu-beer, and be-before I c-c-can s-say bub-bub-buttermilk they g-g-give m-m-me b-b-beer, and r-r-rather t-t-than h-have a f-f-fuss I d-d-drink the b-b-beer, b-but if y-y-you'll m-m-marry m-m-me I'll t-t-try to s-s-say b-bu-buttermilk q-q-quick.

(JAM. *hands SUS. the letter. She opens and reads aloud.*)

SUS. "Susan Smith, you hev throwed me down fer thet stutterin' clown of a Reuben Ricks, but some day you will be sorry and beg on your knees fer me to take you back but I will cast you scornfully aside and tell you you are ded to me forever. There are plenty of other gurls who are dyin' to hev me but I shall leave this place now to seek my fortune but shall sune return and bring with me a charmin' bride decked in dimonds and satings, then sadly you will say It might hev bin me. Fairwell, forever, false-harted one. I will return your tintipe and your lock of hare. J. H." Lot I care. Let's go ter walk, Reuben.

(*Takes hold of REU.'s arm, and they go outdoors, SUS. tossing her head at JAM. as they pass.*)

MRS. SLO. Deacon, it's time we wuz startin' hum. Got your galluses yet?

DEA. I vum, I nearly forgot 'em. (*Gets up and goes to counter.*) What've you gut fer galluses, Bill?

MR. J. I've got a new kind here, Deacon, jest got 'em tother day, a patent 'rangement so's you kin pull 'em up good and tight.

DEA. Them look purty good. Guess I'll try 'em on. (*Takes off coat, puts on suspenders. Mr. J. gives them a yank and pulls them up very high.*) 'Thar, thar, Bill, don't choke me to death. Better let 'em down a leetle. (*Mr. J. tries but unsuccessfully and finally has to cut them.*) That patent sartainly holds 'em up well but I reckon I'd better stick to the old kind a spell longer. I'll take this pair. How much be they?

MR. J. Twenty-five cents.

(DEA. *pays.*)

MRS. SLO. Hev you had the molasses jug filled and got the pound of sody I told you about, Deacon?

DEA. Yes, got 'em out in the wagon. Come along, old woman. Let's be making tracks. It's past my bedtime.

(WIDOW GRAY *rushes in, milkpail on arm, man's straw hat on head with crown out and hair sticking through, calico dress, badly torn. Carries key with huge board attached, talks quickly and excitedly while running from one side of store to other.*)

WIDOW GRAY. Oh, will some one come quick, my cow's fell down, and she can't get up and I'm afraid she'll die and she can't get up and I can't get her up and I don't know what to do 'cause she can't get up and I can't get her up. Deacon, come quick and help me and everybody else come. Oh, dear, dear.

(*Rushes out, followed by DEA. and wife.*)

MR. J. Jim Henry, you go along and help, too. Thet's what comes of a woman tryin' to run a farm alone. She's allus rushin' in here to git some one to help her git some of her pesky animals out of trouble. See she's got a hull plank walk on her door-key now. She's allus losin' that and gettin' some one to hunt round fer it.

*Enter* JENNIE BROWN.

JENNIE. Ma wants ter know if you hev any juicy lemons, coz if you hev she's goin' to buy two of 'em to-morrow.

MR. J. You tell yer ma I've gut some fine uns and they're juicy as my old pipe.

JEN. Yes, sir. Is there any mail fer ma?

MR. J. (*looks*). No, no mail fer any of your family.

JEN. Is there any mail fer paw?

MR. J. No, I said there was no mail for any of your family.

JEN. Is there any mail fer my brother John?

MR. J. Didn't I tell you there wasn't anything. Nothin' fer any of the Browns, long or short, fat or thin, old or young, not a thing fer any of them.

JEN. Is there any mail fer my sister Mary?

MR. J. No, for none of 'em, straight or cross-eyed, knock-kneed or bow-legged or club-footed, so don't ask any more questions.

JEN. Please is there any mail for my grandmother?

MR. J. No, nor for your great-grandmother or your great-grandfather or your great-great-grandmother or your great-great-grandfather or your uncles or your aunts.

JEN. Is there any mail for my Cousin Susie?

MR. J. Nothing for your first, second, third, fourth or forty-fourth cousin. Now are you satisfied?

JEN. Please, when will there be some mail for 'em?

MR. J. You'd better run home quick, little girl.

JEN. Yes, sir. [*Exit* JEN.]

*Enter* LEE SING followed by BOBBIE ROBINSON and JOHN, pulling his braid, calling "*Chinamanee eattee rattee, etc.*"

LEE starts to chase, when they rush out, but return soon and sly in behind stove out of sight.

LEE SING. Me killee bloys if catchee. Me wantee chickee allee livee.

JAM. *enters*.

MR. J. Did the widdy git her cow up, Jim Henry?

JAM. Yes, wan't a thing the matter with it. 'Twus up before we got there.

MR. J. You go git a couple of chickens out of the hen house and bring in here, Jim Henry. How's business, Lee?

Not very rushin' I reckon. Most folks round here do their own washing and we're not much fer wearin' biled shirts.

LEE. Bizness velly poor but I do cheep. I wash ladees twoee dollees a dozen, I wash gentlemenee once and halfee dollees dozen. Velly cheep.

JAM. (*brings in two young roosters and places on counter*). Here you air.

MR. J. Will they lay there, Jim Henry?

JAM. (*giggling*). Reckon not. They're roosters.

MR. J. Feeling kinder smart to-night, ain't ye?

COL. Say, Lee, can't you speak a piece fer us?

JOS. Go ahead, Lee, speak a piece and I'll let you do up my biled shirt some time.

LEE. Me speakee piecee allee samee Melican manee. (*Speaks "Maud Muller"—Chinese version. Applause. Picks up chickens.*) Me goee homee, choppee headees offee.

MRS. J. Don't you hate to cut those poor chickens' heads off, Lee?

LEE. Oh, noee, me noee doee thattee. Me choppee chickee offee headee, thattee allee. [*Exit LEE.*]

(*Boys emerge from behind stove.*)

MR. J. Lucky you kept out of sight till Chinaman got out.

JOHN. Huh, we ain't afraid of him.

*Enter SILAS HARDHACK.*

SILAS. Evenin', gentlemen. What's the news?

COL. I've jest been readin' that a medical man says yaller fever comes from the bite of a femail muskeeto.

JOS. Don't doubt it a bit, not a bit. Did you ever hear of enny trouble that there wasn't a female at the bottom of? Ever since the days of Eve, females have been upsettin' things and I'll bet dollars to donuts thet this rheumatiz of mine cums from some pesky female fly and if you hunt round you'd prob'bly find every ill thet flesh is heir to can be traced to plaguey females. Wish we could ketch all the females and shet 'em up and keep 'em shet up. The only way is fer man to rise in his might and show his power over them.

SIL. (*chuckling*). Bobbie, where's thet compersition I heerd you read in school this arternoon? Gut it with you? Guess you'd better read it so yer pa can hear it.

BOBBIE (*takes dirty paper out of pocket. Watches father out of corner of eyes. Reads*). Cowards is men thet run away so's to live to fite another day. There are very many kinds of cowards such as married men. My father is married and he is a coward up hoam and a brav man down to Jone's store. When he sits round the stove down there he tells how he makes woman keap her proper plais and when he cums home he says, Why shudent man be head of his house, then ma starts talkin' to him and he takes it all back and says he won't never talk like that enny more.

JOS. Bobbie, I will take you out in the woodshed for that. You know my word is law and your mother does as I say allus.

BOB. Pa, ma said to tell you if you wan't home in ten minutes she'd be down after you. Guess the ten minutes most up. You'd better be rolling your hoop.

JOS. Bobbie, you go home an' tell your mother I'll cum home when I git good and ready and not a minit before.

MRS. ROBINSON (*enters with sleeves rolled up, shawl over head*). Joe Robinson, ain't you started yet? (*Walks over to husband and takes him by the ear.*) You lazy, loafin' scoundrel. Didn't I tell ye I wanted you to get some water and chop some wood, and here you're a settin' round here tellin' yer big lies. You march along home now and git to work.

(*Marches him out by ear.*)

SIL. Better put up your umberell, Joe, to keep off the storm. Ain't much danger of breakin' the commandment 'bout coveting yer neighbor's wife in Joe's case. Heerd you hed a compersition, too, Johnnie.

JOHN. Yep, I whacked Bob over the head with my slate in school and he let out a yell and the teacher made me write a compersition of fifty words but it didn't take me long. I wrote "Bobbie's dog Fido run away and he called Fido, Fido, Fido, Fido." (*Continues until fifty words.*) Don't git ahead of this kid. Say, Mr. Jones, ma wants to know what you've got in the shape of cucumbers.

MR. J. Tell her we ain't got nothin' in the shape of cucumbers except bananas. Them's pretty near the same shape. Heard 'bout Zeke Hines eatin' bananas, Colonel?

COL. No, what fool trick's he been cuttin' up now?

MR. J. His mother wuz in here the day this bunch cum

and she bought half a dozen and took 'em home to Zeke. I never kept any afore and Zeke hed never seen one so he et 'em, skins and all, at one settin' and was taken with vi'lent pains in his stomick so's they hed to call Dr. Dolliver and he said fust he guessed he'd have to cut out Zeke's appendix and Zeke began to holler but his mother told him how Zeke had et bananers with the skins on, so he give him a big dose of castor oil and brought him out of it all right.

JOHN. Ma wants a dozen of eggs, but she says she finds two bad ones in ev'ry dozen you send her.

MR. J. Tell her to only git half a dozen to onct, then she'll only git one bad one.

BOB. I want a package of breakfast food.

SIL. I'd like to know when you hear so much of a hoss feeling his oats why you never hear of a pusson feelin' his breakfast food.

COL. Give it up, Silas.

BOB. Do you keep matches, Mr. Jones?

MR. J. Oh, yes, all kind of matches.

BOB. (*walking toward door*). Well, I'll take a trotting match.

(*Dodges out, followed by JOHN.*)

MR. J. I'll give him a trottin' match with my right trotter if I ketch him.

*Enter MARY JANE STEDMAN.*

MRS. J. How'd ye do, Mis' Stedman.

MRS. STEDMAN. Hey?

MRS. J. How'd ye do?

MRS. STED. No, nothin' new. Same old bunnit and shawl I've wore fer ten year.

MRS. J. What will you have?

MRS. STED. Salve? No, I've got part of that last box left yet. I brought over some butter and thought I'd change it fer some caliker. Here's five pound of butter and it's very good if I do say it as shouldn't. How much be ye payin' fer butter?

MRS. J. Fifteen cents a pound.

MRS. STED. (*putting hand back of ear*). Hey?

MRS. J. (*yells in ear*). Fifteen cents.

MRS. STED. Purty low. Well, let me look at some caliker. (MRS. J. *takes down several pieces.*) This air piece is kinder purty. S'pose it'll wash well.



MRS. J. Yes, the colors are fast.

MRS. STED. It wunt last—I don't want it then. Don't want to go to the work of makin' it and not hev it last.

MRS. J. (*in ear*). I said the colors are fast and it will wash well.

MRS. STED. Oh, did ye? I wonder how much I need fer a wrapper.

MRS. J. About ten yards.

MRS. STED. (*hand back of ear*). Hey?

MRS. J. (*very loud*). About—ten—yards.

MRS. STED. Well, I'll take it.

(MRS. J. *measures cloth*. MRS. STED. *gets butter out of box*. MRS. J. *weighs it*.)

MRS. J. Looks like snow.

MRS. STED. Yes, Sally's got a beau. Comes to see her regeler. Likely young feller, he is, too.

MRS. J. 'There's only four pounds of butter.

MRS. STED. Yes, thank ye, my cold is better.

MRS. J. (*in ear*). I said there was only four pounds of butter.

MRS. STED. I weighed it by that five pounds of sugar I bought here last week, anyway.

MRS. J. 'There'll be enough to pay for your caliker and ten cents more.

MRS. STED. No, I ain't goin' to no other store. I want something to darn John's socks with. The way that man wears out his socks is somethin' dredful.

MRS. J. That makes it just right.

MRS. STED. Yes, good-night. [*Exit* MRS. STED.]

*Enter* CYRUS DEPEW *and wife*, SAMANTHY. CYRUS *goes over to stove with men, speaks and sits down, apparently talking*. SAMANTHY *goes to other side*.

SAMANTHY. How-do, Mis' Jones. Nice evenin'. I'd like to see some spool silk if you've got any. I'm a-tryin' to make over thet old black silk dress I hed when I wuz married. Got any black?

MRS. J. Yes, we've got a few spools but it's so turrible high now we didn't get many. Fifteen cents a spool.

SAM. Dew tell neow. I never heern tell of sich a thing. I never paid more'n ten. What on airth makes it so high?

MRS. J. I understand the silk worms air all dead.

SAM. Well, I s'pose I'll hev to git it seein' as I've gut the dress all ripped up but I do hate to pay sich prices. Don't know whatever we're a-comin' to. I want a piece of black tape. How much is that?

MRS. J. Thet's ten cents a piece.

SAM. Land sakes, I never used to pay but five fer thet.

MRS. J. Thet's riz too. I hear the tapeworms are all dead so I s'pose 'tis hard to git tape, too.

SAM. A hull lots of our chickens hev been caught by hawks. Guess the price of eggs oughter go up. Cyrus, did you bring in that air box of eggs?

CYRUS. No, mother, I'll go and bring 'em in now.

*(Cy. brings in box of eggs. MRS. J. and SAM. make great work of counting and reckoning.)*

SIL. Thar's a lot of helpful advice in this 'ere paper, but they do seem to git a leetle mixed sometimes. Here's some one asked how to assist twins through the teethin' per'od and the editor ses, "If you are unfortunite enough to be plagued with these little pests the quickest way of settlin' 'em is to cover them with straw and set the straw on fire," and another one asked how to get red of grasshoppers and he tells 'em the best method of treatment is to give them each a warm bath twict a day and rub their gums with paregoric.

COL. Guess 'twould keep a man purty busy ketchin' 'em if they's as thick as they be in my front field sometimes.

CY. Wonderful things they dew in the medicul lines nowadays. I wuz readin' las' night 'bout a remarkable case.

SIL. That so, what wuz it?

CY. Wall, it seemed a man hed lost his nose, and seein' as how he had ten fingers and no nose, he thought p'r'aps he cud have the tip of his little finger grafted on fer a nose. Told the dockter about his idee and he said it cud be done slick as a whistle. It worked fine and now thet man has a nose as good as emmybody. Only trouble wuz in the rush that air dockter furgut to yank out the fingernail and it kinder bothers the man 'bout cuttin' it. Science is striding forrard wonderful. Been fishin' lately, Colonel?

COL. Yes, went over to the stream tother day.

CY. What luck did ye hev?

COL. Purty fair. Caught 'bout twenty-five pick'el, biggest one 'bout two feet long and hed a big fish hook in his stumick.

SIL. Say, Colonel, did I ever tell you 'bout the pick'el I

caught onct? He was a whopper. Wuz over a yard long and hed an anchor in his stumick.

CY. Ever hear tell of George Washington, Silas? How'd yer corn turn out this year, Colonel? Most ev'rybudy hed purty poor luck.

COL. Purty poor, purty poor. 'Tain't much use to try to raise corn with them pesky crows. I put up scarecrows all over thet air field and my boy Pete and me tuk turns a-watchin' thet piece all day. Pete 'ud start out 'fore daylight with his shotgun and stay thar till noon, then I'd go and stay till after dark. Thought we'd git ahead of them air crows for onct and they did keep away all day but ev'ry mornin' we'd find corn dug up.

CY. How'd you account fer that?

COL. Couldn't account fer it at all till me and Pete watched one night and I swum, if them air confounded crows didn't ketch fireflies and hop over thet corn-field with them fireflies in their mouths fer lanterns so's to see where the corn wuz. When they'd find a hill, they'd drop the firefly and dig up the corn, then pick up their lantern and find another hill. Beats all, them crows.

SIL. Them air fellers in Washington sent me some seed but it was so tarnation dry thet the stalks all dried up an' I thought there wa'n't goin' to be no corn so I turned my old hogs in thar to root. Bin in thar a leetle while an' I thought I'd walk over to see they hadn't gut out and I swanee if they hedn't rooted up big ears of corn from the foot of them air dried stalks. Well, I jist heaved to and went to work diggin' jist like I would a field of pertaters and gut the best crop of corn I ever hed. Must hev bin new kind of seed.

CY. Corn ain't what it used to be 'round here. I remember when corn used to grow thirty or forty feet high, hed ears two feet long and three or four of 'em made a bushel. Hed to cut the stalks with a cross-cut saw. Yes-sir-ee. I mind the time five year ago I hed a purty good garden of cabbages an' I spent a lot of time workin' over 'em. One day I lost my watch thar and Samanthy an' me hunted that air piece over time and agin but we couldn't find hide ner hair of it. I felt powerful bad 'bout it 'cause it was a drefful ackret time piece. Well, it went along 'til 'most Chris'mus an' one day we wuz goin' to hev a biled dinner so Samanthy went down cellar and brought up a big cabbage and started to cut it open when her knife struck somethin' hard so she cut 'round kinder keerful like and

there wuz thet watch. Tuk it up and looked at it an' I vum if it wa'n't runnin' and right on time, hedn't lost a minit.

SIL. How on airth could it be runnin' if it hed been lost all thet time?

CY. Well, it was one of these air curly-heads of cabbige and the leaves kept a-growin' and a-twistin' 'round thet air watch stem and kept it wound up tight. Couldn't wind it a bit when I found it.

MR. J. Jerusha, where is Lizzie—soarin' away on the wing of poetick fancy as usual?

MRS. J. No, I see her out in the kitchen a minit ago gnawin' on a chicken wing. Guess she's a-comin' now.

*Enter ELYZ., with book.*

MR. J. (*eating something and smacking lips*). Gut thet chicken all et, Liz?

ELYZ. Papaw, I do wish you would stop smacking your lips when you eat.

MR. J. You wouldn't want me 'round smackin' other people's lips, would ye?

SAM. You seem to be fond of reading, 'Lizbeth. S'pose you hev read the "Last Days of Pompey." I allus liked ter read thet.

ELYZ. No, I haven't read the "Last Days of Pompeii," at least not all of them, but I've read all the "Arabian Nights." Mamma, was there any letter for me to-night?

MRS. J. Why, yes, I think I did see one. (*ELYZ. goes to office, finds letter, goes aside and reads several times with great joy, then puts in dress when it drops to floor and is found by JAM., who reads it to himself almost splitting his sides over it.*) How high is thet air thermom'ter, Lizzie? Seems kinder chilly here.

ELYZ. The thermometer is about five feet from the floor, but perhaps what you wish to know is the altitude of the mercury. That stands at sixty-eight degrees.

SAM. S'pose you heerd Jim Smith's boy, Sam, has started to larn dent'stry, Jerusha.

MRS. J. No, dew tell; why I seed him here in the store jist a day or two ago. When did he go away to school?

SAM. Oh, he's studyin' to hum. One of these air cor'spondence schools, they call 'em. Larn it all by writin'. Kinder inconvenient I shud call it. Got Henry Jenkins in the cheer t'other day, guv him the gas, then remembered he hedn't gut as

fur as knowin' how to pull out a tooth, so hed to write to the school ter find out and it tuk three days to git an ansur. Kep' givin' Hen gas all that time coz he said he was afeared if Hen onct got out he'd never come agin and he wa'n't goin' to take no risks 'bout losing a patient. Said he needed the practiz an' the fifty cents.

MRS. J. Kinder take off the profits usin' so much gas.

(ELYZ. *has been uttering exclamations of annoyance, fidgeting, etc.*)

SAM. 'Lizabeth seems to be sufferin' with a narvous complaint.

MRS. J. No, she's only sufferin' with the family grammer. Reckon she'll git over it in time.

JAM. Oh, gee, jest listen to the guff some one's been writing Liz.

(ELYZ. *feels in dress for letter, finds it gone, then frantically tries to get it from JAM., who holds it high above head.*)

ELYZ. You horrid boy, you give me that letter at once.

JAM. Think pa and ma ought to hear it fust. (*Reads.*) "For some remote time past a secret passion has been firing my bosom internally with loving for you. I have navigated every channel in the magnitude of my extensive jurisdiction to cruelly smother the growing love-knot that is being constructed in my heart, but the humid lamp of affection trimmed by Cupid's productive hand still nourishes that love-sickened organ. Needless is it to numerically extemporize the great conflagration that has been generated in my reason and my heart. My educational capabilities have abandoned me and I can only cling to the hope that a reciprocal passion has been engendered in your lovely being. You are the sweetest ——"

(ELYZ. *gets letter.*) Guess you'd better take it out, Liz, it's so sweet I'm 'fraid the honey'll be drippin' all over me.

(ELYZ. *goes out.*)

MR. J. Did ye ever hear sech rot?

MRS. J. Guess thet explains where 'Lizabeth gits all them big words of hers.

*Enter ANNIE GOODWIN.*

ANNIE. Ma wants a package of dye and she wants it a fashionable color.

MRS. J. What's she goin' to dye? Some of her dresses?

AN. No, Dr. Dolliver says ma has stomach trouble and she ought to diet, and ma says if she's got to dye her stomach she might as well dye it a fashionable color.

MRS. J. 'Thet's so. Here's a package of green dye. I read the other day thet green was goin' to be dreadful fashion'ble this year. Anything else, Annie?

AN. (*hesitating and embarrassed*). Ma said to tell you I need a biscuit and I told her I was ashamed to tell you that.

MRS. J. You need a biscuit! You need a biscuit! Oh, I guess I know what she meant, a package of Uneeda Biscuits. Here they are.

AN. Mother says she'll pay you in butter next time she comes to the store.

MRS. J. That'll be all right, Annie. I'll give you a stick of candy if you'll speak a little piece for me. Can't you speak "Twinkle, twinkle, little star"?

AN. Oh, I don't say it that way now. Ma says that's old-fashioned. I say

"Scintillate, scintillate, globule orific,  
Fain would I fathom thy nature's specific,  
Loftily poised in ether capacious."

MRS. J. Here's two sticks of candy, Annie. Guess you earned 'em with them jaw-breakers, but I'd ruther hear it the old-fashioned way. [*Exit AN.*]

CY. You know, we wuz a-talkin' of startin' a lib'ry and I've bin a-talkin' to a few pussons about it and they all agree it's not only a lux'ry but a necess'ty. Think how much better 'twould be these long winter evenin's to be absorbin' nollodge than to be swappin' lies 'round this air stove or staying to hum and goin' to bed 'cause there ain't nothin' else ter do. What do you folks think on it?

COL. I think 'twould be a turrible good idee and I'm willin' to help it along all I kin. I'm a leetle short on ready money jest now, bein' as I'm sufferin' frum finanshal stringency, but I'll give a copy of *Scribners' Magazine* thet one of the summer boarders left at our house twenty year ago. We prize it greatly not only fer its intrinsick value but on account of the associashuns clustered 'round it, but I allus said we should be willin' to make sacrifices fer our native town and the lib'ry shell hev it.



SIL. Wall, I reckon I'd better give ready money. Here's ten cents to help the good cause along.

CY. I give fifteen cents t'other day, but to show how awful anxious I am to git the lib'ry started I'll give ten more makin' a grand total of twenty-five cents.

SAM. Cyrus is so dredful lib'ral with his money thet I expect we'll die in the poor-house.

MR. J. I've got an old 'rithmetic I studied when I wuz a boy in school. Guess I'll give that.

MRS. J. Think there's an old reader up in the attic too. One your grandfather hed. You'd better give 'em that too. Some real purty pieces in it.

SAM. I've got a copy of a fashion plate I've bin cutting my skirts and polonaises by fer ten year but I've bin real keerful of it and I'll give 'em that.

CY. I'm glad we've gut sich publick-spirited people. Jonas Townsend, the justice of peace, said he'd donate a copy of Blackstone on law to give the risin' generation a chance to becum lawyers. He said his children had tore out 'bout half the pages but the rest wuz all good. I know the doctor and the minister'll give something so I think we've gut a turrible good start and shell hev a fine lib'ry in a short time.

SAM. Cyrus, we must be going hum. When thet man gits started on lib'ry he don't know when ter stop.

CY. Wall, Samanthy, I'm all ready. Gut your egg-box?

SAM. Yes, and all the rest of my bundles. Good-night, folks: - [Exeunt SAM. and CY.]

*Enter KATIE DUSENBERRY, stands in centre of floor.*

MRS. J. Is there anything you want, Katie?

KATIE. Oh, yes, I want a gold watch and a di'mond ring and sealskin sacque and lots of things but pa sent me for some cough medicine.

MRS. J. Here's the cough medicine, Katie, but I guess you'll hev to wait till ye grow up and marry a furrin nobleman fer the rest of the things.

MR. J. Your pa's been havin' the grip, ain't he, Katie?

KAT. Yes, and we're all tired out waitin' on him. He's groanin' all the time, says his head'll split and his back'll break and his legs are sore and he told ma he knew he was goin' to die but ma told him he was too cross to die and the doctor said there wa'n't much the matter with him and then pa got mad

and told her he didn't want none of her lip. I guess we'll all be glad when he gets better. He told me to hurry home with this dope so I'll hev to run or I'll git it. [Exit KAT.]

*Enter MANDY BAKER, followed by husband, a meek-looking man who quietly sits behind stove and says nothing.*

MRS. J. Good-evenin', Mandy.

MANDY. Good-evenin', Mis' Jones. Any mail for me?

MRS. J. Nothing for you but here's a letter for Job.

JOB (*coming to office, takes letter*). May I open it, Mandy?

MANDY. No, put it in your pocket and I'll read it first when we get home and see if I want you to read it.

(JOB goes back to stove.)

MRS. J. When did you git back from your Woman's Rights Convention, Mandy?

MANDY. Got back last night. How I wish every woman in this town could hev gone to that meeting, then the bright day would soon dawn when downtrodden woman should have her rights. (*Strikes attitude.*) But, mark my words, in spite of tyrant man who seeks to oppress us, some day we women will arise in our might and demand the vote. But 'twon't do fer us to rest easy and keep settin' quiet. We want the women of this day and generation to live to see thet glorious day but death is stealing on us unawares and with ev'ry breath I draw some one drops dead.

COL. Say, Mandy, you'd better take something fur your breath if it's as bad as that. They do say as how coffee is powerful good fer it. Jest chew up a mouthful onct in a while.

MANDY (*looks at him scornfully but does not deign to reply. Others laugh*). What does man know about woman's work which is never done?

SIL. Guess that's right in your case, Mandy.

MANDY (*continues, gesticulating*). Is there one man here who has ever done anything to lighten his wife's burdens, who gets up in the mornin', cooks the breakfast, washes the dishes, gets the children off to school, sews on buttons, bakes, mends and does the thousand and one duties thet belong to a wife and mother. Is there one such man here?

JOB (*rising*). Yes, Mandy, I'm right there, and I've done all them things fer fifteen year so's you could attend your

woman's rights meetin's but even the patience of Job is gitting purty nigh exhausted.

MANDY. Job Baker, who asked you to speak? You sit down and keep quiet.

JOB. Yes, Mandy.

*(Meekly subsides.)*

MRS. J. I hear you recited a pome to the Convention. Couldn't you let us hear it?

*(MANDY recites "Priscilla Prim's Views on Woman's Rights," Price, 30 cents.)*

MANDY. I'll hev two pounds of crackers and a half pound of cheese. *(Gets them.)* Job, come along home now quick. You ain't washed your supper dishes yet.

JOB *(sighing)*. Yes, Mandy. *[Exeunt JOB and MANDY.]*

MR. J. Ever see a reg'stered letter, colonel?

COL. No, I've heerd of 'em but I never see one on 'em.

MR. J. Here's one come fer Dr. Dolliver. Some one's been sending him some money.

SIL. Let's see how the thing looks, Bill.

*(MR. J. hands out letter. SIL. and COL. examine closely, hold up to light, etc.)*

COL. Looks about like enny letter. Wonder how much is in it.

SIL. *(feeling)*. Should say 'bout five dollars by the feel.

*(MR. J. puts letter back. Enter PATRICK.)*

PATRICK. Good-avening, gintlemen, and how do yez be afther foinding yersilves? Is there a letther for me, Misther Jones?

MR. J. Nothin' to-night, Patrick.

PAT. Well, here's tin dollars I want to be sinding to me auld mother in Ireland.

MR. J. Just fill out this blank, Pat, and we'll send it along.

*(Gives him blank.)*

PAT. Phwhat's this?

MR. J. It's a sorter letter of advice about the money.

PAT. Phwhat's that got to do wid me sinding me auld mother tin dollars?

MR. J. Oh, it's just a rule of the post-office that a letter of advice must be sent to the postmaster when the money is sent then.

PAT. Arrah, thin, I'll be afther wroiting a lettther of advice to Michael O'Flynn and glad he'll be to be afther hearing frum me, for begorra we wint to school together in auld Ireland.

*(Takes paper to counter and writes.)*

*Enter DR. DOLLIVER.*

DOCTOR. Good-evening, everybody.

MR. J. Good-evenin', Doctor. How's all your patients? Keepin' you purty busy.

DOCTOR. Lots of colds round. I tell folks they wouldn't have grip if they'd keep their feet dry.

SIL. How do you account for Tim Small heveng grip five years runnin', Doctor, when he's gut two wooden legs?

DOCTOR. Must have wet his stumps.

COL. Lot in the papers lately 'bout folks bein' buried alive. Take any stock in it, Doctor?

DOCTOR. No, not a bit. I'm sure it never happens to any of my patients.

MR. J. Guess you're right there, Doctor. No hope for 'em if you git hold of 'em, eh?

DOCTOR. Any mail for me to-night?

MR. J. Yes, got a reg'stered letter fur you, Doctor. Fust time we ever had one come to the office.

DOCTOR. That so? Guess it must be conscience money. *(Looks at letter and puts in pocket. Walks up to notice and reads.)* Deacon wants to sell his old black horse, don't he? Guess that horse must be having another spell of sickness and the Deacon don't want to risk giving him any more medicine. *(Laughs.)* Don't s'pose the Deacon ever told you about that time he give the horse that dose of calomel? *(Laughs.)*

COL. No, never heerd a word. Knew Deacon hed a spell of sickness awhile ago.

DOCTOR. That was the time. *(Laughs heartily.)* He came and asked me what he'd better do for the horse and I told him to give him a dose of calomel, about ten times the dose for a man. "Can you get him to take it?" says I. "Oh, yes," says he, "I'll fix up a way to get it down his throat. Well, the next morning his wife come running over for me to

come quick 'cause the Deacon was dying. (*Laughs.*) You see he'd put a big chunk of wood in that horse's mouth to keep it open, then he put the calomel in a piece of hose, put one end in the horse's mouth and the other end in his own, all ready to blow it down the horse's throat but the old horse was too smart for the Deacon and gave a good hard blow first and blew every bit of that calomel down the Deacon's throat. About finished him. (*Laughter.*)

SIL. Guess we'll hev a leetle fun with the Deacon 'bout that when we see him.

DOCTOR. I've got to run in to see how Granny Brown is before I go to bed. Good-night. [*Exit DOCTOR.*]

PAT. Well, I've written the letther of advice and I'll be afther rading it to yez. "Dear Dennis, I'm towld I must be afther wroiting you a little advice if I do be sinding me mother tin dollars, so I'll advise ye to hand it over at onct or I'll give ye a black oiye whin I see yez. Do yez moind the foine toimes we used to have courtin' the gurrils in auld Ireland, but shure, they're han'somer in Ameriky, and I advise ye to be comin' over to this glorious land of the free for it's rich I'm after ghetting here. Oi've done as the law says and written ye some good advice, so hand over the tin dollars to me mother."

*Enter DELILAH MARTIN, excited.*

DELILAH. I druv over alone and I met one of them awful automobeels and it scairt me most to death. A body don't take no comfort drivin' nowadays.

MRS. J. Thet's jest so. Wuz your hoss very much frightened of the horrid thing?

DEL. Wall, he got mighty narvous but I ain't jest sartain whether it's the autermobeel that skeered him or them creeturs rigged up with goggles and sich like in 'em. I think one looks 'bout as bad as t'other.

MRS. J. Thet's jest what I think. What any human bein' wants to rig themselves up like that for is more'n I can sense. There's a postal here for you, Delilah. (*Looks but can't find it.*) Well, I don't know where I did put that but it don't make no diff'rence. I read it and it wuz from your Cousin Jane saying she wuz goin' to be married. Is she going to make a good match?

DEL. I didn't think no great of him when she hed him here last summer, but she says she's given it ser'us thought, bin to

a 'tologer, a medjum, two hand-readers, and two card-readers, and they all say to go ahead and marry him—Jane never was one of the reckless kind—allus looks 'fore she leaps. Bein' as I'm in here I might as well git her weddin' present. Didn't you hev some little vases left from Chris'mus? Guess one of 'em would do. (MRS. J. *takes down several vases.* DEL. *examines.*) 'These are kinder purty. How much is this one?

MRS. J. That one is ten cents.

DEL. Well, now, I call thet reel han'sum and I reckon she'll be tickled to death to hev it fer her parlor. I allus try to give my relatives somethin' handsome fur a weddin' present. Here's your ten cents. Pay as you go, is my motto.

MRS. J. S'pose you went to preachin' Sunday. You're allus one of the faithful uns.

DEL. Yes, I went, but we hed a drefful short sermon.

MRS. J. How'd that happen? Parson Dusenberry is usually pretty lengthy.

DEL. Wall, he sorter 'pologized fer it. His little gal Katie has got a little puppy and he got into parson's study and chewed up part of the sermon so he could only give us what was left of it. Simon Fraser happened to be there and you know he goes to the Advent Church and their preacher is terrible long winded, so what does Simon do after preachin' but go right up to Parson Dusenberry and ask if he couldn't buy that pup to give to his preacher.

MR. J. Huh, should think they would want to do something to stop him. You've heerd about the time he talked on the prophets, ain't you? He talked and talked 'bout the minor prophets as he called 'em 'til ev'ry one was achin' fer him to get through. Finally he finished 'em and his people drew a sigh of relief, thought he'd got to the end, then he waded in agin and said: "Now, I hev finished with the minor prophets, but what about Nehemiah? Where is Nehemiah's place? What room is there for Nehemiah? Where is his place?" Thet wuz too much fer Simon so he riz up and sez, "Nehemiah can have my place, I'm goin' hum." Made the parson awful mad but Si didn't keer a bit.

PAT. Shure, he's the wan I wint to hear one morning and he kapt a-sayin' over and over, "Who'll be the shape and who'll be the goats? Who'll be the shape and who'll be the goats?" And no one would be ayther so I riz up and says, "I'll be the shape and this man be me soide will be the goat. Now go on and till us the joke."



MRS. J. I heerd you hed the Methodist and Advent minister both to tea the other night.

DEL. Yes, I'm a Methodist and James is an Advent, so I thought I'd make one gittin' ready do for both of them, and I never thought of the blessin' till we got set down to the table and I didn't know which one to ask fur fear of offendin' the other, but my boy Tommy, quick as a flash, began countin' out "One, two, three, mother caught a flea, the flea died and mother cried, one, two, three," and ended by pointin' his finger at the Advent one and called out, "You're it, go ahead and ask the blessin' 'fore the biskits git all cold," and that settled it all right.

COL. Purty good preacher, thet Methedist parson, ain't he?

DEL. Yes, he's a good preacher, but his deafness does trouble him turrible. Why, only a fortnite ago come Sunday he asked Deacon Solomon to give out a notice about some new hymn books and also about some children thet wuz goin' to be baptized. Well, the Deacon forgut all about the hymn books, but gave out the notice about the christening, said: "All those who have children to be baptized, please send their names at once to the parson." The parson never heerd a word but surmised he wuz talkin' 'bout the new hymn books, so he sez, "I will say for the benefit of those who haven't any yet that they may obtain them at the sewing circle next Wednesday, the little ones at twenty-five cents and the larger ones at fifty cents." (*Laughter.*) That old hoss of mine'll be tired standin' while I'm a-gossiping here. Guess he's got over his skeer now and I'd better be a-going. Hev to look out not to break this air vase. [*Exit DEL.*]

SIL. Are you working now, Pat?

PAT. No, I'm afther luki' for a job. Do yez know of anny one that nades a foirst-class man?

SIL. What can you do? Can you take care of horses?

PAT. Shure, 'twould warrum your heart to see the care I'd be afther takin' of them.

SIL. Know anything about pigs, Pat?

PAT. Shure, and didn't we alway have a houseful of the cratur's in auld Oireland.

COL. Si Poland is buildin' a new house. P'raps you could get a job there? Know how to make an Italian blind?

PAT. Shure, that's aisy as rollin' off a log.

COL. How would you go to work at it, Pat?

PAT. Shure, I'd poke my two fingers in his two oiyes and he'd be blind as a bat in a jiffy.

MR. J. Better get naturalized, Pat, then you'd get a job all right.

PAT. Shure, and that's what I troid to do last wake, and the fule axed me had I red the Declaration of Indepandance and I sed, "Oi hev not," thin he says, "Hev you red the Constitution?" and I says, "I hev not," then he loked ugly loike and says he, "What hev you red?" and says I, "I hev red hair on my head."

SIL. Guess you've got the Irish wit. Can you tell me the difference between wit and humor?

PAT. Begorra, it's loike the difference betwane whin yir woife tickles ye undher the chin wid a sthraw from the broom and whin she hits ye over the head with the handle of it.

COL. Wonder what Mandy Baker thought 'twas when she tackled me one day last summer. I hed the toothache and wuz a-lyin' with my face down in the grass out in the sun front of the house and she come along, didn't know me, thought it wuz some one drunk, so she began giving one of her temp'rance lectures with a hull lot of figgers telling how one glass of beer put out to int'rest in David's time would amount to millions and a lot more figgers. I was feeling purty ugly with thet old tooth aching like all possessed, so I jest turned over on my back and sez, sez I, "No, I don't know nothin' 'bout them figgers and don't want ter but I've gut a few figgers of my own I'll give you. If you don't vamoose two hundred and twenty-five feet in two seconds I'll hit you ninety-seven times and make you see a million stars," and she vamoosed lively, now, I tell ye.

PAT. Say, did yez iver see wan of these tiliphones?

MR. J. No, did you, Pat?

PAT. Yes, I wurruked in a coal-yard in the city onct and wan day the man in the office had to go out and axed would I answer the tiliphone. I'd watched him wurruk the thing so said, "Faix an' I will that." This tiliphone, you understand is a contrapshun with a sender and a recaver at each ind of the loine. You take the sinder up and put it to your mouth and ye put the recaver to yer ear and ye say hello in the recaver. (*Goes through motions.*) In a minit the bell on the tiliphone rung and I put the recaver to my ear and says, "hello." "Hello," says the other feller, "is this 649562?" "Aw, gwan," ses I, "do you think I'm a freight car?" and I hung

up the auld recaver. Thought they could be afther playing their joikes on me but I jist left 'em.

MR. J. Think you're as smart as any of 'em, don't you, Pat?

PAT. Indade and I do. I met wan of these big-faling cratur's in the city onct and he wanted to know where the mayor lived so I towld him and thin jist frindly loike I axed him who he moight be and he says, "I am the Right Honorable Royal Ethelbert Sommers, Knight of the Cross, Knight of St. John, Knight of St. George, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Knight of Malta." "Shure," says I, "I'm plazed to meet you. I'm Patrick O'Mulligan of Dublin, Ireland, last noight, to-noight, noight before last, and ivery other noight in the wake." (*Enter NORAH CASSIDY.*) Good-avenin', Norah, shure it's a sight fur sore oyes to be afther seeing yez the noight.

NORAH. Go long wid yer auld blarney, Patrick O'Mulligan. Mrs. Jones, the missus towld me to get some marconi.

MRS. J. I wonder what that is. I wonder if she meant macaroni.

*(Takes out stick of macaroni and shows.)*

NOR. Shure, ma'am, be's that to ate? When I wurruked in the city for Mrs. Gibbs they did be afther usin' wan of thim sticks to loight the gas.

MRS. J. I reckon this is what Mis' Briggs wants. She asked me to get some. Guess nobody else here uses the stuff. What made you leave your place in the city, Norah?

NOR. (*arms on hips*). Phwat made me lave? 'Tis afther insultin' me yez are, ma'am. I'd loike to see anny wan could make me lave. Oi go whin I plazes and not a day before.

MRS. J. Mis' Briggs said she'd give you a trial, didn't she?

NOR. That's phwat she said but I sed to her, Indade, and ye'll not be afther giving me a troial, shure I hed too many troials in my last place and I'll stand no more from annybody.

MR. J. How is Mr. Briggs this evenin'? He's bin quite sick, ain't he?

NOR. Shure, he's worse this avenin'. He was taken wid another dizase this afthernoon.

MR. J. What's the trouble with him now?

NOR. I don't know jist phwat it is but the doctor do be callin' it convalescent.

MRS. J. You've bin sick yourself, hevn't you, Norah?

NOR. Yes, and moighty scared I was at foirst whin the dockter towld me the long name of the dizase but whin he only charged me fifty cents I knew it didn't be afther amountin' to mooch.

PAT. Where's your Cousin Bridgit that used to bay afther wurruking over beyant?

NOR. Shure, she wint to New Yorruck and she be's goin' to be married come Aister. I hear Casey is a foine man but I do be tellin' her she moight hev looked hoigher.

PAT. Indade and how's that?

NOR. Casey worruks in the cellar av wan of thim skoiscrapers in New Yorruck and by turning over hir little finger she moight hev had Finnegan phwat worruks on the top story of that same skoiscrapper. Shure, an' I would hev looked hoigher and been afther taking Finnegan.

MRS. J. Where's that beau of yours, Norah, that used to be acomin' 'round here?

NOR. Shure and niver anither worrud will I iver be afther sayin' to him agin. He got hurt drivin' a hivy coal tame and they were afther taking him to the hospital. Shure, me heart ached for the poor boy so I wint to see him. I wint to wan of thim dockter and says, "Oi want to say the man phwat was run over by the tame." "Yez can't," says he, "he's under the infloonce of Ann Esthetics." "Oi don't know who Miss Ann Esthetics is," says I, "but if he'll act loike that and git under some low crature's infloonce now what'll he do whin we're married. Shure, I'll not be afther marryin' him at all, at all," and I lift moighty dignifoid loike.

PAT. It's moighty stoylish ye're looking thé noight, Norah.

NOR. Shure, the missus hed company to tay and she do be afther troiying to make a great show and she says, "Norah, I hope you'll spread yirsilf." Shure, and I'm willin' to oblage so I put on this hoopskirt to spread all I could but me poor kismet do ache from being on 'em all day.

MRS. J. Your kismet ache? What on airth is your kismet, Norah?

NOR. Shure, you niver lived in the city, did yez. to larn their talk. Kismet means yer fate cause where I worruked in the city the missus had wan of them figgers, statutory she called it and whin I was dustin' it wan day I axed her what the worrud on the bottom was and she says it was kismet and meant fate.

Yes, I have some corns on me kismet. Do yez be afther selling any corn plasters?

MRS. J. Yes, this is fine fur corns. Ten cents a box.

NOR. I'll be afther having a box. I see you hev some of them mottoes loike the missus bought the other day. Shure, I think they're jist illigant. Your bhoy brought it up while the missus was out and I put it up in the parlor where it loked foine, but the missus tuk it down rale hateful loike as soon as she got her oiye on it.

MRS. J. Why, Norah, those are door-mats to wipe your feet on.

NOR. Woipe your fate on sich an illigant thing as that. It's strange things they do be doing in this country. It's home I must be afther gitting. *[Exit NOR.]*

*Enter ITALIAN, very stiff motioned.*

ITALIAN. Meester, you have eeny medeceen to purify de blood?

MR. J. Here's a bottle of sas'parilla, clean your blood and clear your complexion.

IT. Got eenything feefty cent for de blood? Don't care 'bout coompleexon.

MR. J. Yes, here's something for fifty cents.

IT. I takes eet.

SIL. Dago, what makes you so stiff?

IT. I weel tell to you. When I leetle child was, muskeetoos bite me much. My mother bathe me with, what you call eet, sodee, sodee, strong sodee. One day she got ready bathe me, no think of sodee, called my father to bring sodee, he made mistake, brought starch, mother used it, made stiff all my life.

COL. What makes your nose so red, Pat?

PAT. Shure, it glowin' with proid because it kapes out of other papple's bizness. Say, you're an Eyetalyun, ain't ye?

IT. No, no; me Frenchman; father, mother born Italy, Italians. I born in France, Frenchman.

PAT. Begorra, thin if a cat had kittens in the oven, would they be biskits? Come on, Frenchie, let's be afther going.

*[Exeunt PAT and IT.]*

*Enter MR. and MRS. JONATHAN ABNER. MRS. ABNER goes over to MRS. J. MR. ABNER to stove.*

MRS. J. Glad to see ye back, Cynthy. Hed a nice visit in the city with yer darter?

CYNTHIA. I wuz rale pleased to see Rachel but they dew hev strange doin's in the city. I never wuz in the city before and never rode on the keers and I dunno as I ever want to agin but I got along purty well. I watched other folks and did as they did and as I allus said if you use your eyes and your tongue you kin git along anywhere. I want some turkey red cotton, Jerushy, and some piller-ticking. I'm goin' to fill two pillars with my goose feathers and send 'em to Rachel.

*(Examines goods.)*

COL. Did ye git a good price fur your hay, Jonathan?

JONATHAN. Purty fair but money's kinder scurce round here. Papers hev a good deal to say 'bout tainted money lately but as near as I kin figger it thar's just two reasons why that air money is tainted.

SIL. What's the two reasons, Jonathan?

JON. 'Cause 'tain't yours and 'tain't mine. *(Laughs.)*

SIL. Well, there's times when I don't keer fur all the money in the world, tainted or not tainted.

JON. That must be when you say with Solomon "All is vanity."

SIL. No, it's when I'm asleep.

COL. How'd you come out with thet air consarn you wuz makin' fer waterin' yer garden, Jonathan?

JON. I worked on thet tarnal thing fer days and there wa'n't a sign of rain, jist got it finished and started out to water thet garden and it began to rain cats and dogs. Can't do anything without competition these days. It rained most ev'ry day the rest of the summer.

CYN. As I wuz a sayin' I watched what other folks did. I didn't jest know how to buy a ticket but I saw a lady go up to a little gate so I jist follered her and she says Cora Vale, single and puts down her money so I put down my money and sed "Cynthia Abner, married." The man wuz reel pleasant and smilin' and asked me where I wuz goin' and give me the ticket. Wall, I got in the keer, and I confess I did feel narvous at fust but I got along purty well until I turned round and saw there wuz an injun hitched on the back of us and I'd allus heern tell it 'ud make a body sick to ride back'ards so when the man that takes the tickets went by I jest pulled his coat and says, "Couldn't you take that injun off the back? I'm afeerd I'll be sick," but he jest laffed and said it wuz a



steep place and they needed it there to push but he was reel accom'adating and hed it tuk off in a little while.

MRS. J. How'd you know when to git off?

CYN. Wall, I kep' askin' ev'ry one round me ev'ry few minits if we'd got to Oaklands, thet's where Rachel lives, and they said they'd tell me and they did but after we got off the keers we hed to ride on them pesky 'lectric keers and I got purty narvous fear they'd carry us by Rachel's on 'em but I notised the man that took the money kept callin' names and people 'ud get out. He called William and the keer stopped and a man got out, s'pose his name was William, then he called Ellis and another man got out so I knew by thet you jist had to tell him your front name and he'd tell you when to git out so I told Jonathan and he stud up and sed, "My fust name is Jonathan and we want to git out at Oaklands." The man was reel pleasant and laffed hearty like and ses he, "That's a long way yet," so we jest settled back to see the sights. People kep' a pullin' on a bell and I asked a boy thet sot side of me what thet was for and he sez, "You pull thet one when you want somethin' to eat." I felt kinder faint seein' as how I didn't eat much breakfast so I thought I'd like a little bite to eat and I pulled thet bell good and hard about a dozen times. The man came along, lookin' reel ugly and ses he, "Who pulled thet bell?" "I did," ses I, "and I'll hev a good, strong cup of tea and a doughnut." "That'll cost me about a dollar," ses he. "Land sakes," ses I, "vittles is high here be'n't they?" but he never brought 'em to me at all. I'll hev two yards of this air turkey-red and four yards of the tickin' and two postage stamps.

MRS. J. What denomination?

CYN. Wall, now, Jerushy, ye know as well as I dew thet I've bin a Methedist all my days, allus belonged to thet denomination.

MRS. J. One or two cent stamps, I meant, Cynthy.

CYN. Two cents uns. What's the price of this air thermom'ter?

MRS. J. Forty-eight cents.

CYN. Wall, we broke ourn yisterday but I guess I'll wait till next time I come 'fore I buy a new one 'cause I read in ternight's paper thet thermom'ters would drop 'fore mornin' so I might as well save a leetle on it.

JON. (*coming over to box near counter*). What kind of fish you got here, Bill?

MR. J. That's codfish. Don't you know codfish when you see it?

JON. (*holding up several long hairs*). Got so much hair on it, didn't know but it was a mermaid. Got any collars? (MR. J. *shows collars*; JON. *tries on*.) These ain't big enough. Ain't you got nothin' bigger, Bill?

COL. Say, Jonathan, you'll hev to go to a harness shop to git fitted.

JON. Dunno but I will. What'd you call them things?

MR. J. Thet's somethin' new. They call 'em sweaters and they say they're fine and warm fer cold weather. Knit of wool and slips on over yer head.

JON. Wall, now, I reckon one of them would be jist the huckeberry for me to wear haulin' wood. Don't you think so, mother?

CYN. Yes, looks as if it might be reel comfort'ble.

JON. Guess I'll try it on to see if it fits. (*After very much work gets it on*.) It's a sight of trouble to git the thing on but it does make you warm. (*Wipes face*.) How'd you like it, mother?

CYN. It looks rale nice on ye.

JON. (*tries to take off, after long and many contortions succeeds*). Sweaters, ye call 'em. They're well named, don't know when I've ever taken sich a sweat. Too much of a sweater fur me, guess I'll stick to my old cardigan a spell longer.

MRS. J. S'pose you went to church in the city, Cynthy?

CYN. Yes, I did and I never see sich bad manners. The hull choir wuz up thar and sung nice most of the time but when one young woman thet I s'pose they hed a spite agin begun to sing every one of thet hull choir stopped short but she wuz purty spunky and went right through it alone, s'pose she wa'n't going to let on it plagued her none. She kerried the tune pretty well too but I guess she felt a leetle confused fur she kep' sayin' the same words over and over. S'pose they were mad at her fer somethin' but 'twas a mean way to spite themselves.

MRS. J. I should say so. Did you see anything of Mrs. Page, she thet wuz Betsey Ann Sampson? They do says she lives in great style.

CYN. I didn't want her to hear I'd bin to the city and hedn't called on her so I hunted her up. They dew say as how she is to hum on a hoss and I wuz kinder 'feerd she'd be

on one when I called and I shouldn't exactly know how to act talkin' to a woman in the house on a hoss but she wa'n't and I was thankful.

SIL. Jonathan, how's your son gittin' along thet went out West?

JON. Oh, he's makin' his fortin out thar. I tell you the West is the place fer a young man nowadays. Expect he'll be one of these air billionaires in a few year. He allus wuz a mighty smart boy, too smart fer this leetle town, had to git off to show his mettle.

MR. J. Thet makes me think. Thar's a letter fer you, Jonathan. P'raps it's frum him.

JON. (*takes letter, looks at it carefully*). Yes, I guess thet's frum him. Don't forgit his old father and mother in his prosperity. Prob'bly sending some money. Mother, got yer glasses? I ain't got mine with me.

CYN. No, I left mine to hum, too. Mis' Jones'll read it to us. His town people'll all be inter'sted to hear of his success.

MRS. J. (*reads*). "Dear Father, meet me at the old saw-mill to-morrer night after dark. Bring with you a quilt and a pair of shoes. I hev a hat, a collar and a pair of shoe-strings."

JON. Cynthy, do you see the time? We must git right home.

[*Exeunt JON. and CYN. hurriedly.*]

(*Great laughter.*)

SIL. Guess they wish you hadn't told his towns people of his great success, Mis' Jones.

*Enter MARTHA REYNOLDS, limping.*

MRS. J. What's happened to you, Marthy?

MARTHA. Thet pesky cat of mine bit my toe, bin lettin' the old tabby sleep with me sence it's bin so cold and along near mornin' last We'n'sday, no 'Thursdays, let me see, no 'twas We'n'sday, no 'twasn't We'n'sday, yes, I believe 'twas We'n'sday. I felt somethin' hurt awful, woke me up out of a sound sleep and do you know thet old cat had bit my toe 'til it bled. I wuz so mad I jest opened the winder and throwed thet cat out.

MRS. J. Arniky is dreadful good to take out soreness.

MAR. I've bin putting thet on and it's some better. Reckon it'll be all right in a few days now.

*Enter HANS SCHNEIDER.*

HANS. Haf you any sauerkraut, Mester Jones?

MR. J. No, we don't keep that at all. Not enough Germans around here to eat it.

HANS. Mine vife ees sick and I vant to git something make her eet, make her vell.

MRS. J. What's the matter with your wife, Hans?

HANS. The doctors do call eet the indeegestion. We used to put up sefen barrels of sauerkraut ev'ry fall but dose cabbage were so high dis fall we could only afford to put up t'ree barrel to haf in case of sickness but mine vife and childers been sick so mooch this winter it ees all gone. I must get something for mine vife to eet to make her vell. Haf you any sausages?

MR. J. No, we're all out of sausages.

HANS. What haf you in dose can up there?

MR. J. (*takes down large tin box*). That's corn beef hash. A new lot I've jest got in.

SIL. Them's a good deal bigger cans then you used to hev, Bill.

MR. J. There ain't no more in 'em but thet air new food law makes 'em print everythin' they put in the hash so they hed to have a good, big box to git it all on.

HANS. How mooch is de hash?

MR. J. Twenty-five cents.

HANS. I take it—it vill maype make mine sick vife vell.

[*Exit HANS.*]

MAR. 'Pears to me ye're gettin' fat, ain't you, Jerushy? Look's if you'd put on thirty or forty pound the last month. Gittin' kinder chunky, tubby and double chinced. You reely ought to do somethin' fer your figger, physical torture or some sich exercises. You're gettin' old lookin' in the back. Don't think that dress you've got on is rale becomin' to you, kinder brings out the saller in your complexion. Seems jest as if some people didn't hev enny ambition 'tall. Jist give up and let themselves git as ugly as they could.

MRS. J. (*frigidly*). Was there anything you wanted, Marthy?

MAR. I want two pounds of sugar and a paper of pins.

MRS. J. William, you git the sugar, will you?

(*MRS. J. looks for pins.*)

MAR. Seems to me your darter 'Lizbeth was lookin' dredful peaked last time I seen her. Hain't enny consumption in the family, be there? People with her complexion usually die

of consumption and I shud think you'd feel reel narvous 'bout her. Your boy, Jim Henry, purty troublesome, ain't he? I s'pose the neighbors hate to say anything to you 'bout it but they all say they believe he'll end on the gallus. Don't see what you kin do though 'cept worry over it.

MRS. J. Here are your pins.

MR. J. And here's your sugar.

MAR. Land sakes, thet's a turrible small bundle fer two pound. If you ever leave the store bizness you'd better go into the prize ring. You'd be a good light-weight; guess I'll look at some onbleached cloth, Jerushy—got to be a makin' some new sheets purty quick.

COL. (*coming to counter*). Guess I'll hev a plug of tobaccy and a few matches, Bill.

(*Goes back to stove.*)

*Enter AGENT.*

AGENT. Cawn't I interwest you gentlemen in a life insuance, something every man with a family ought to attend to. Will you give me youah attention while I explain the mewits of my company.

MR. J. Yes, go ahead if you want to.

AGENT. My company has the gweatest capital back of it of any on earth, always pays its insuance pwomptly, pays no lawge salaries, is perfectly safe and sound, wates cheaper than any company in existence, don't-cher-know. Now don't you want to take out a policy?

MR. J. No, I only thought I've give ye a chance to practice sayin' your little piece sence you wanted to so bad. I'm an insurance agent myself and got these air fellers insured.

AGENT. Cawn't I interwest you in a typewriter? Evah see one? Gweat help in makin' out your bills.

MR. J. No-sir-ee. Got stuck on them onct. Thought they'd be kinder handy seein' I'm not very knacky with the pen but they're regular swindles. Can't even write your name with it onless ye can play the organ.

AGENT. Ev'ry man who wuns a post-office ought to have a safe. Just look at this catalogue—our safes are absolutely fire-proof. We twied it—put a dog in it—suwwounded it with fire for a week, opened that safe, how do you think we found that dog?

COL. Dead, of course.

AGENT. Yes, how do you think he died? Fwoze to death. Better owder one of them.

MR. J. I reckon I don't need one of 'em yit awhile.

AGENT. Cawn't seem to make any impwession on you gentlemen.

*(Goes over to women.)*

SIL. I b'lieve I larned in school that an impression is a dent in a soft spot. Reckon 'twould be purty easy to make an impression in his head.

AGENT. Ladies, cawn't I sell you this beautiful book, pwofusely illustwated—a dozen of silvah forks with each ordah.

MAR. Humph, I've heern tell they use them air forks in the city but we don't never use 'em to our house. They leak. Knife's good enough fur us to eat with.

AGENT *(puts up lorgnette and inspects her, walks away disgusted)*. Aw, have you any cigawettes?

MR. J. No, we don't keep them. Got some good plug tobaccy and a 'T. D. Try one of 'em.

AGENT. Naw, it would be too stwong for my constitwution. *(Walks over to stove.)* What do you fellahs do when you sit awound the stove every night?

SIL. Wall, sometimes we set and think and then agin other times we jest set.

AGENT. Could you tell me where I'd find Mr. Joseph Wobinson in the mowning?

COL. Wall, he'll likely be down in his orchard with his hogs. You'll know him 'cause he'll hev a hat on.

MR. J. Here's a letter fur Mr. Frances St. Clair Bigelow. Anybudy you know, mister?

AGENT. Aw, yes, that's for me. *(Opens and reads.)* "I am sending by mail the bundle containing your ulster. The buttons were so heavy I cut them off and you will find them in the inside left-hand pocket." My sistah is an awfully bwight girl. Has the bundle awwived?

MR. J. No, ain't seen nothin' of it. *[Exit AGENT.]*

*Enter MRS. BRIGGS and son.*

MRS. BRIGGS. I would like to look at some culinary utensils.

MRS. J. *(hesitating)*. We hev'n't any of them.



MRS. B. Why, I see some on the shelf, those kettles.

MRS. J. Oh, is that what you mean?

*(Takes down kettles.)*

CLAUDIUS. Mama, what is that?

*(Pointing to something on shelf.)*

MRS. B. Never point at anything, my dear.

CLAUD. But supposing I don't know the name of it.

MRS. B. Then let the salesman take down everything in the store until he comes to it.

MAR. What's your little boy's name?

MRS. B. Claudius Cecil Le Baron Francis Ethelbert Briggs.

MAR. Land sakes, no wonder he looks delicate, carryin' all that round with him. That's a purty little pin you've got on. *(Gets up and examines it.)* Reel purty fur a cheap one. S'pose your husband give it to you to keep you still 'bout that grass widdy he's takin' to ride so much.

MRS. B. My husband does no such thing.

MAR. I told 'em I didn't believe you knew nothin' 'bout it and I thought ye oughter be told and I don't never shirk my duty. That hat you've got on looks a leetle young fer you, I think it's a mistake to try to look girlish after you're middle-aged and old lookin'. Well, I must be goin'. Mr. Jones, that rockin' cheer you sold me t'other day ain't no good fur nothin', rockers ain't even and it keeps agoin' all over the carpet.

MR. J. *(winking)*. Jerushy, didn't Jim Henry make a mistake and take Marthy one of them new patent rockers that move round so's not to wear out the carpet in one spot?

MRS. J. I thought I missed that patent rocker. Guess he must have.

MR. J. That rocker cost a dollar more'n the other. I'll send Jim Henry over fur it in the mornin', Marthy, and send you one of the reg'lar kind.

MAR. No, you wun't neither, mistake er no mistake it's your own fault and I won't pay the extra doller and I wun't change it.

*[Exit MAR.]*

MR. J. Thought that ud fix her.

MRS. B. I'd like to look at some dress goods. *(MRS. J. takes down several pieces.)* I didn't want to buy any. I was just looking for my sister.

MRS. J. Oh, then here's one more piece. Let me take that down. Perhaps you will find your sister in that.

MR. J. I hear your husband got hurt, Mis' Briggs.

MRS. B. Yes he is suffering from abrasion of the cuticle, tumefaction, ecchymosis and extravasation in the integument and cellular tissue about the left orbit.

SIL. (*aside*). He got drunk and got a black eye. That's all thet ails him

*Enter HENRY WITHROW.*

HENRY. Ma wants to know if you've gut any nursing bottles.

MRS. J. Got jest one left. S'pose you're tickled to death with thet new baby brother, ain't you?

HEN. Naw, he's no good.

MR. J. What's the matter with him, Henry?

HEN. Aw, he's a sight, his face is red all over and he's baldheaded and he ain't gut no teeth and he can't do nuthin' but holler and cry all the time. I'd a good deal ruther hev a dorg. How much is the bottle?

MRS. J. Ten cents, Henry.

HEN. Ten cents jest throwed away. I want a stick uv molasses candy. [*Exit HEN.*

MRS. J. I hear you hev Jennie Frost working fer you. You'd better watch her. She ain't exactly honest.

MRS. B. She is not as culpable as they say. She simply lacks the high intelligence which enables her to exercise fine ethical discrimination. I would like a dozen of the hen fruit.

MR. J. Meanin' eggs, I s'pose.

MRS. B. Come, Claudius Cecil Le Baron Ethelbert Francis, it's time you were in bed. [*Exeunt MRS. B. and CLAUD.*

*Enter MATILDY HOXIE with shawl over head, cup in hand.*

MATILDY. Good-evenin', Mis' Jones, wuz most red dy fer bed when I thought I hedn't set my bread and I didn't hev enny hop 'east so I jest run over to borry a cupful. Got any to spare?

MRS. J. Yes, I made a new batch yesterday. (*Goes out in kitchen to get it.* MAT. *goes up to poster hanging on wall.*) What's this, somethin' they're a-goin' to hev at the church?

MR. J. Yes, a temp'rance talk, Tildy.

MAT. Dew tell, guess I'll hev to put on my specs and read it. (*Puts on glasses, reads aloud.*) "Leckture on temp'rance. Rev. Adoniram Moore will leckture in the basement of the

Methodist Church next Tuesday evenin', on the Evil Effects of Temp'rance. Rev. Mr. Moore is an authority on the subjectk, bein' as how he is a drunkard hisself. Come one, come all, and hear his great leckture. No admission will be charged to nobody. Two hours' talk fur nuthin'. Them as drinks is invited and them as don't but would like to has a specshul invite to attend. Doors will be throwed open at six thirty. Leckture at seven. Come early and git good seats up front. Remember there is no charge. Here is a chance to git somethin' fur nuthin'. The church will be het." (*Takes off glasses.*) Well, I hope a good number will turn out if the sassiety is goin' to the expense of heving the church het besides burning out keerosene.

*Enter* MRS. J., *with cup of yeast.*

MRS. J. Here's your 'east, Tildy.

MAT. Much obleeged. I'll do as much for you some tim Jerushy.

MRS. J. Wa'n't there a letter fur Tildy, William?

MR. J. Believe I did see one fur her.

MAT. That so? Don't b'lieve I've hed a letter fer five years. Wonder who can be a-writin' to me. (MR. J. *hands her letter. She opens and reads.*) Well, if it isn't from Brother Henry that went to Californy twenty-five year ago. Fust time I've heerd from him. Says he arrived safely.

MRS. J. How your grandmother?

MAT. She wuz kinder sick yesterday but she's purty well most of the time and real hearty. Et a hull mince pie and half a dozen doughnuts fer lunch 'fore she went to bed the other night. She thinks prob'bly 'twus somethin' she et kinder upset her, but she can't think what 'twuz. Purty smart fur a woman that's ninety come June. My chilblains are botherin' me turrible, guess I'll hev to rub 'em with keerosene. Ever try thet fer chilblains? Did you know Jedidy Pinkham hed left off her mournin' an' wuz wearin' gray colors ag'in an' it's roomered she hez a beau. I think it's scanderlous when her last husband's grave ain't grassed over yit. That makes me think did you know Amely Haines had given Clem Henderson the mitten, and they say Clem is turrible broke up over it bein' as he's bin courtin' her fifteen year and intended to get married 'fore many years more. Heerd about Tom Hawes? He's hed a bad cold on his chest fur some time and Mis' Withrow give him some horse liniment and told him to rub it on 'fore

he went to bed and 'twould cure him fur sartain so Tom he rubbed on a good lot of it and says he suffered the tortures of martyrs all night. Thet air liniment burnt him so he hed to sit up most all night and fan himself and Mis' Hawes sed she never knew before that Tom knew so many swear words. Mis' Hawes went over to tell Mis' Withrow 'bout it next mornin', so Mis' Withrow looked in the cupboard where she keeps her medicines and found 'twas the carbolick acid she'd give Tom. Mis' Withrow thought it wuz an awful good joke but Tom sed he didn't see a blamed thing ter laff about. Turrible windy weather we're a-havin'. I did a leetle extra wash Friday, washed out some of Asa's red wool shirts and socks an' I hedn't much more'n got 'em on the line when the wind tore 'em off and whisked 'em all over the yard. I finally found all the socks but I couldn't git track of thet shirt, but Asa says he knows who's a-wearin' thet red flannel undershirt of hisn and if the guilty pusson doesn't bring it back soon he'll hev the law on him.

MRS. J. Thought you were going to stay over to Mis' Skinner's all this week.

MAT. I did cal'kate ter but the next mornin' after I gut there I got up with a turrible cold in my head. Hed to sleep with the window wide open coz it stuck and Mis' Skinner couldn't git it down, noway. I kep' a-sneezin' an' a-sneezin' so much I didn't hev no time to talk, and what's the use of goin' visitin' if you can't talk, so I ses to Mis' Skinner, ses I, "I'm a-goin' right home and cum back to finish out my visit when I kin talk and not sneeze." Well, settin' here ain't makin' my bread. Come over and see me, Jerushy.

[Exit MAT.]

*Enter ZEKE HINES.*

COL. Hello, Zeke, s'posed you wuz in bed long ago.

ZEKE. My mother let me sit up 'cause I wuz a good boy to-day, and she give me a cent to spend and said I could come down here and get a stick of candy. (*Goes to show case.*) I'll hev a stick of thet long striped candy so's I kin suck it.

(*Gets candy, begins to suck it but makes faces as if it hurts.*)

SIL. What ails yer mouth, Zeke?

ZEKE. Went out ter the woodpile t'other mornin' and saw the axe all covered with white stuff, looked like sugar, so I

tried to lick it off with my tongue but my tongue stuck to the axe and I couldn't get it off so ma hed to pour boilin' water on it. Then she licked me 'cause I didn't know it was frost. Oh, it hurts some to suck.

COL. (*slyly places hot soapstone in chair*). Sit down, Zeke, jest as cheap as standin'. (ZEKE *sits on hot stone, jumps up yelling.*) What's the matter now, Zeke?

ZEKE. Thet chair's kinder warm. Getting hold of lots of hot things lately. Went into the blacksmith shop the other day and saw some iron thet wuz reel purty, all bright red and I thought I'd like to play with it coz it was so purty so I grabbed it when he wuzn't looking, but it wuz so hot I hed to drop it.

MR. J. You seem to be hevin' lots of trouble, Zeke.

ZEKE. Hed the toothache t'other night, too.

MR. J. That so, did you pull the tooth out?

ZEKE. I tried ter. Seth Quimby told me to tie a long string on a flatiron and t'other end to my tooth and open the door and throw the flatiron fur's I could throw it and the tooth would come out réal easy.

SIL. Well, how'd it work?

ZEKE. It worked all right, only I tied it on the wrong tooth.

COL. Speak a piece fer us, Zeke. Stand right up here on this box like an orator.

(*Fixes small box on end. ZEKE tries to stand on it, falls several times but finally succeeds in balancing himself. Makes low bow and ridiculous gestures, speaks.*)

"The boy stood on the burning deck  
Eatin' peanuts by the peck,  
His father called, he would not go  
Because he liked them peanuts so well."

(*Gets down from box.*)

MR. J. Now say that piece about Tommy Reed and I'll give you another stick of candy.

(*After several attempts, mounts box again.*)

"'I'll never chew tobacco,' says little Tommy Reed,  
'I will not chew tobacco, it is a filthy weed,'  
Says little Tommy Reed."

(*Great applause. Mr. J. gives ZEKE candy.*)

ZEKE. I'll hev to go home or my mother'll lick me.

[*Exit ZEKE.*]

SIL. (*rising and yawning*). Wall, I reckon it's time to be gittin' to bed.

COL. I reckon so, too. My old woman told me to git some salt so's she could churn to-morrow.

SIL. Guess I'd better hev some tobaccy.

[*Exeunt SIL. and COL.*]

MR. J. Guess we can lock up now. Nigh onto nine o'clock.

(*Locks one door.*)

MRS. J. Yes, I'm clean beat out. Hed a lot of trade this evenin'. Guess 'Lizbeth, Susan and Jim Henry hev all gone to bed.

[*Exeunt MR. and MRS. J.*]



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